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## A YEAR OF PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT.

We are rather apt in England to over-estimate the power of the American President. That power is undoubtedly very great. The President is the head, to a large extent, the working head, of the army and navy; he has charge of the whole Federal administration and the appointment of ambassadors, consuls, judges of the Supreme Court, Cabinet Ministers—in fact of all the higher Federal officers—initiates in him; he may convene Congress in extraordinary session whenever he so pleases; his right of veto gives him the power to delay and at times to block any and every measure of which he disapproves; the conduct of foreign affairs, in all except its final phase, is under his immediate control: and virtually he is irremovable. It is with all this in their minds that Englishmen turn to Germany and the German Emperor for a parallel to the Presidential authority. But to all this there is another and less imposing side. The President selects officers and makes appointments, but it is the Senate that confirms or rejects them. The President concludes treaties, but, as we know only too well, a two-thirds majority in the Senate is required for their ratification. The President suggests legislation; it is for Congress to act on his suggestion or to disregard it,

as it wills. The President vetoes a measure, but it becomes law if both Houses by a two-thirds majority pass it anew over his head. In fact the actual influence of the President on legislation is in many ways less than that of an English Prime Minister. Students of Constitutions will not need to be reminded of the cause of this. The "Sages of 1789" funk'd—there is no other word for it—a strong Executive. Whatever else the President might be, they took good care he should not be a George the Third. They were morbidly on the defensive against the evils of "one-man power," against anything that might give an opening to "monarchical ambitions." One consequence of this is that, in ordinary times, the American form of administration is practically a conspiracy for doing nothing. The functions and authority of each power in the State are so limited that no one person, no one body, is capable of leading either the nation or the Legislature, or framing and pursuing a continuous policy. Each organ of government, the Executive, the Legislature, the Judiciary, is made a jealous observer and restrainer of the others. The energy which under the English or Cabinet system is given up almost entirely to the work of legislation

spends itself in America in excessive strife among the various bodies created to check and balance one another. Nobody has even a comparatively free hand. Everybody hampers everybody else. The framers of the Constitution accomplished more than they intended. They divided the Executive from the Legislature so firmly as to make each not only independent but hostile, and therefore weak. The connecting link which goes by the name of the English Cabinet they either missed or did not appreciate. In the quiet times which have ordinarily been the lot of the Republic, not much inconvenience has been felt from the rivalries of this triad of authorities. Some great questions, such as the tariff and currency, which under a more positive form of government would have been settled long ago, have been merely tinkered at. But many rash schemes of legislation have been squashed, many hot-headed Presidents held in check, many successive Houses "taught their place." The negative work has, as a rule, been well done. It is when the country is face to face with some national peril, and immediate action becomes imperative, that the Presidential system of 1789 shows its defects. At all such times Congress practically abdicates. This was what happened during the war of 1812, the Civil War, and the Spanish-American War. There is really no choice in the matter. The Constitution does not permit of rapid action by the Legislature; and, assuming such action to be necessary, it can only be carried out by one person or one board vested with almost plenary authority. Congress is too clogged and cumbersome for such work. It must be done by the President or not done at all. An autocracy in a time of emergency is the price America has to pay for her checks and balances in ordinary times.

It is, however, with ordinary times

that we are now dealing; and in ordinary times the President is anything but an autocrat. Even under the most favorable circumstances, that is to say, when his party commands a majority in both Houses, his power over legislation depends wholly on the goodwill of Congress. He may recommend everything, but he can direct nothing. Neither he nor his Cabinet Ministers sit in Congress, or hold any recognized communication with it except through the medium of written messages. The Administration has no official spokesman in either House to expound its policy and influence the course of debate. An appeal to the known wishes or opinions of the President is resented as dictation. Both Houses are rigidly tenacious of their Constitutional powers, jealous of outside interference, especially from the White House, and always ready to encroach on the debatable ground left unassigned by the Constitution. The President, it is true, has his veto, and that is a powerful weapon, for defence at any rate. It is in attack that he is tied and hampered. He can prevent Congress from doing some things, but he cannot oblige it to do others. His Presidential Message may point the way, but neither he nor any one can ensure that it will be followed. Congress in all such matters is its own master. Not only may it completely disregard all the President's suggestions, but it may wreck every scheme on which his heart is set by withholding supplies, defeating treaties, refusing to confirm his appointments or attaching impossible riders to its bills. And the President in such a case is all but helpless. He may by a long campaign, by appealing to the people over the heads of their representatives, succeed at length in coercing Congress. Or by a judicious humoring of the Bosses and by allowing the Senate to distribute his patronage for him, he

may also carry his point. Either way, the fact remains that his disabilities are as great as, if not greater than, his powers, and that the success of any Administration depends on the harmony that exists between Congress and the Executive. Mr. McKinley attained this harmony in a quite wonderful degree. He oiled the machinery of government with loving and imperturbable patience, and the wheels ran with an ease unknown since Washington's first term of office. His was a persuasive, accordant nature, far too much so, indeed, to admit of strong leadership. He hated to say No; it was a positive pain to him to disappoint anybody, to refuse a request. Sooner than do so he allowed himself to be led occasionally into dubious paths. He was a man who outside Protection had few interests and fewer convictions; none, perhaps, that he would not have felt it a duty to sacrifice at the bidding of the people. He accepted fully and heartily the doctrine that the President should follow, and not attempt to lead, public opinion. The old tag, *Vox populi, vox Dei*, was more than an old tag to him; it was the guiding principle of his whole political life and policy. His ear was always to the ground because that was where he conceived it ought to be. The Presidential office he regarded as a sort of conduit-pipe between Congress and the electorate. Great things happened during his Presidency, but he can hardly be said to have presided over them. At best they flowed through him as through a funnel. His mind and temperament were altogether of the kind that asks for guidance and, when the oracles differ, strives hard to "solder close impossibilities and make them kiss," and is willing to wait in patience for the unmistakable cue. Once convinced of what the people wanted—and his instinct in such matters was all but in-

fallible; he knew his countrymen as Palmerston knew Englishmen—Mr. McKinley would work overtime to see that they got it. But he had to know first; it was that that gave him confidence; he could not stand alone. His ways of dealing with Congress were such as sprang inevitably from his conception of the Presidential duties. They were those of adroit persuasion. He consulted everybody, humored everybody, put himself frankly in the hands of his friends, made the utmost use of his patronage as a gentle weapon of conciliation, and usually contrived to reach his goal. It was not done without some disturbance of the balance of power arranged by the Constitution. There were times when the Presidency as a controlling and directing authority seemed almost in abeyance, when one had to look in the Senate and among a favored group of "bosses" to find the real head of the United States. But as against this there were at least two compensations. Washington was at peace, and the wishes of the people got themselves translated into law with unexampled despatch.

Whatever else might be prophesied of President Roosevelt, it could at least be said with certainty that Mr. McKinley's methods would not be his. The two men stood at opposite poles, not of policy—rarely have a President and Vice-President been in such close political agreement—but of character and disposition. And in the White House it is personality rather than opinions that counts. The Presidency is a very human office, dependent for its influence at least as much on the man who occupies it as on its Constitutional prerogatives. No change could well be greater than that from the late to the present Chief Magistrate. All through his career Mr. Roosevelt has shown that the instinct for command is innate in him. Where-

ever he goes he must dominate; like Mr. Chamberlain, he cannot help leading. What he sees he sees clearly; what he feels he feels intensely. He is compact equally of positiveness and emotionalism. "Right thou feelest, rush to do," was the Emersonian formula for "freedom's secret." In a sense it is Mr. Roosevelt's too—less dangerous in him than in most men because of his background of solid Dutch caution and level-headedness. Mere feelings are never his guide; still less so are mere theories. There is no type that irritates him more, no type he has "scored" so mercilessly, as the men of impossible standards and extravagant ideals—a type more common than one would think in American and especially in New York politics. Himself as "practical" a politician, though in another way, as Mr. Croker, the intemperance that overshoots the mark is as intolerable to him as the indifference that does not even trouble to aim. Misguided effort is all but as abhorrent to his nature as no effort at all. Indeed, I am not sure that the over-civilized, hypercritical Mugwump does not rouse him more effectually than even the *jeunesse dorée*. He preaches "the strenuous life" in season and out of season, meaning by that not necessarily a life of bustle, hurly-burly, conflict, but simply honest, active endeavor in any sphere, Kant's life as much as Cromwell's, Darwin's equally with Lincoln's. But unless such life is regulated by judgment as well as labor, he has no use for it. His own temperament, though quickly and easily stirred, is essentially Whiggish, content to advance a step at a time, inexorable on vital points, but never tempted to extremes. One could hazard the man from his books or his books from the man. His prose has a hard, confident, metallic texture, with little light or shade playing about it, yet strong in its rush and reso-

nance—the prose of a man of action, blunt and utterly straightforward, clean-cut and sincere. Style and matter alike bespeak the man's mind. It is, if I may say so, a bludgeon of a mind, healthily unoriginal and non-creative, of wide range and the closest of grips, and with a dogmatic turn for the common sense of things, a sane but hardly a deep mind, and used like a bludgeon for criticism, exhortation, attack. A man in many ways after Carlyle's own heart, who has "swallowed formulas," is transparently incapable of anything mean, underhand or equivocal, preaches and practices the gospel of work, and flinches before nothing. With all this, as Americans now realize, Mr. Roosevelt is far from impulsive. That he is a fighting, breezy type of man goes without saying; that now and then he will say the indiscreet thing, and sometimes even do it, that he has to keep constant watch over himself and his vivid emotions may also be taken for granted. But then he all but invariably succeeds in doing so. A year ago Americans felt uneasy about their new President. They feared his overplus of energy, the impact of his impetuous tingling personality. He had the same reputation for militant "rashness" that the Kaiser once enjoyed. It took William II. ten years to live down the nervousness his accession inspired. It has taken Theodore Roosevelt just one year. There was never any real reason why the people should not have had the same confidence in him as in Mr. McKinley. But they saw in the new President, first of all, youth—which even Americans suspect in politics; and secondly, a very vigorous and outspoken character, apt at times to launch out with ultra-Bismarckian bluntness; and from this they argued that his impulsiveness was a danger to the State. It is true that the President has nothing of the featureless cau-



tion that commends itself to the politicians. He does things—such as asking Booker Washington to dinner and denouncing lynchings—that Mr. McKinley, the type of the “political” President, would never have dreamed of doing. But what Americans now realize, as the result of his first year of office, is that his impulsiveness is in no sense dangerous; that it is confined to little things and an occasional hasty word; and that in all essentials he is one of the most balanced and conservative of Americans.

So buoyant, virile and masterful a figure would win a following anywhere. In America the force of his attractiveness is peculiarly felt. They are an emotional people, always ready to exalt any man who rises even an inch above the undistinguished multitude, quick on the uptake, swiftly responsive to a touch of firmness. They will follow a leader, when they find one, farther than most nations, and forgive him, as they forgave Grant, almost anything. In politics, especially, the man who trusts to his own strength, and will fight to the last for his convictions, commends their instant homage; the more so as such a man is perhaps rarer in the United States than even in England. President Roosevelt has this quality of political courage, which is something higher than moral courage, personal courage, or the courage of one's opinions, because it embraces all three, to a degree that Cleveland did not equal and Lincoln did not surpass. Perhaps the readiest touchstone of any and every President's character is to be looked for in the appointments he makes. Patronage is the most engrossing and irksome of all calls upon his time. A weak President, a President who is “playing politics” with an eye to the next election, uses the offices at his disposal to reward party services, conciliate enemies, keep local wire-

pullers loyal and in good humor, and above all to ingratiate himself with Senators and Congressmen by allowing them to nominate their own men. This was the policy which Mr. McKinley very largely pursued. One of the ablest and most careful of American publicists, Mr. Henry Loomis Nelson, declares that at the moment of Mr. Roosevelt's accession “the Civil Service of the country was in a state of demoralization such as had not been known since the days of Grant.” “Predatory politicians had again captured many important places: the federal offices in the Southern States were filled, almost without exception, by social outcasts whose business in politics was not only to enjoy the emoluments of office, but to sell quadrennially to the highest bidder nearly one-third of the delegates to the National Convention of their party; and this corrupt organization was in close alliance with the Democratic rings of the Southern States, dividing the plunder between them, keeping down the Republican vote, and preventing decent whites from joining the Republican party.” Mr. Roosevelt, a life-long advocate and practitioner of clean politics, and with a knowledge of the Civil Service and of the tricks of its enemies such as no President has ever possessed, was not the man to stand this sort of thing. He at once strengthened the Civil Service Commission, restored sixteen hundred offices to the merit system that his predecessor had exempted, brought sixty Indian agents within the scope of classified service, and armed the Commissioners with new and real powers over the office-holders. But it was in his attitude towards the vast and important class of posts that as yet are outside the merit system, and appointments to which are made by the President “with the advice and consent of the Senate,” that Mr. Roosevelt showed

his strength most plainly. These posts include the diplomatic and consular services, customs and internal revenue collectorships, federal judgeships, and the bigger post-offices of the country. Of late years it is not too much to say that the power of appointment to these offices has been taken from the President and usurped by the Senate. The "advice and consent of the Senate" has developed into the "compulsion of the Senate." Presidents have disregarded Senatorial nominations and made their own selections at the peril of having confirmation withheld and their appointments rejected. Senators have pushed their Constitutional prerogatives to the uttermost, and used them to build up their personal power in the States they represent, with little thought to the character of their nominees or their fitness for office. Being an undying body, tenacious of the privileges that are theirs by right, still more tenacious of such as they have been able to extort by pressure, it has been no easy matter for a President to withstand them single-handed. Most Presidents have in fact thrown up the unequal struggle, and blindly accepted the Senatorial candidates. Not so President Roosevelt. In all such matters he has but one test, that of efficiency; and he is inexorable in applying it. As at Albany, so at Washington, he wages no war on the party leaders. He consults them at every turn, and listens to their suggestions; but he makes no appointments on their recommendation unless and until he is personally satisfied of the character and capacity of the nominee. Other things being equal, a Republican will get the post. But if the Republican candidate is manifestly unfit, as he usually is in the Southern States, no amount of political backing, no references to the man's usefulness in 1904, no Senatorial insistence, will move President

Roosevelt to appoint him. More than once, to the scandal of the politicians, he has gone outside the ranks of his own party and forced the appointment of a Democrat on the novel and refreshing ground that he was the man best fitted to fill the vacancy. And the Senate, grumble as it may, dare not, in the face of a jubilant and approving people, refuse confirmation. President Roosevelt nowhere exceeds his Constitutional rights. He shares heartily and willingly with the Senate in the work of selection. All that he insists upon is that the man selected shall be the best; and so long as Senators keep a single eye on that essential he welcomes their advice and co-operation most cordially. Their privileges remain as they were; it is only the standard by which they are to be exercised that has been changed. A small thing after all, it may be said. On the contrary, this alteration of standard is little less than a revolution. It revives the Presidential authority, it knocks the bottom out of all that is left of the spoils system, it makes public office a public trust in fact as well as name. So long as President Roosevelt remains at the White House, and possibly for much longer, the sinister league between party politics and the civil service that debased and demoralized both, is dissolved. In the Army and Navy, too, the same simple principles have been rigorously enforced. Extraneous influences that had nothing to do with efficiency had wormed their way into the American Army with an almost English facility. Here again President Roosevelt was not as one working in the dark. There is little about either service that he does not know both from the inside and the outside, and in his first Message to Congress he put his finger unerringly both on the evil and the remedy. For the future, he announced, promotions would

be made "solely with regard to the good of the service and to the capacity and merit of the man himself. No pressure, political, social or personal, of any kind, will be permitted to exercise the least effect in any question of promotion or detail; and if there is reason to believe that such pressure is exercised at the instigation of the officer concerned, it will be held to militate against him." Mr. Brodrick might conceivably say and mean as much; Mr. Roosevelt practised it. One of his first official acts was to appoint as Chief of Ordnance, with the rank of Brigadier-General, a captain who stood twenty-ninth on the list of the officers of his corps. Almost for the first time since the Civil War the Army has ceased to be the playground of political favorites; seniority and privileged incompetence no longer direct it, and the upward path is at last thrown freely open to the admirable graduates of West Point. Of equal decisiveness was the President's intervention in the miserable Sampson-Schley feud, a sort of Buller episode magnified a hundred-fold, and disputed for over three years with a passionate ferocity. Mr. Roosevelt wound it up with a couple of stinging rebukes to General Miles and Admiral Dewey that killed the controversy and taught both services a lesson of discipline that will be long remembered. It may indeed be said without the least exaggeration that in every branch of the administration the impress of his resolute character has made itself felt in the direction of an efficiency and a public-spiritedness where fifteen months ago all was slackness and "politics."

It is on this, the administrative, side, that the Presidential office shows its strength. Its weakness is no less apparent when there arises any question of legislation. In his Message of last December Mr. Roosevelt "most ear-

nestly invited" the attention of Congress "to the wisdom, indeed to the vital need, of providing for a substantial reduction in the tariff duties on Cuban imports into the United States." To this course, he added, "we are bound by every consideration of honor and expediency." On the one hand, the United States, by putting an end to Spanish rule, had, at the same time, destroyed a market for Cuban produce that had been cultivated for centuries. Unless, therefore, she intended the work of liberation to end in bankruptcy, she lay under a heavy obligation to provide an immediate and sufficient outlet for Cuban sugar and tobacco. And, on the other hand, a reduction of the Dingley tariff schedules in favor of Cuba had been promised by Mr. McKinley in return for the island's admission of American suzerainty and the cession of certain ports and coaling-stations. Cuba had fulfilled her part of the bargain; it remained for the Americans to fulfil theirs. The need, as Mr. Roosevelt said, was vital. The island, exhausted by the struggle with Spain and deprived of her chief market, was industrially crippled. To save her from absolute ruin, to give her the essential start on her Republican career, and to put the coping-stone on Governor-General Wood's excellent work of redemption, all that was required was a fifty per cent. reduction of the Dingley rates on her two main exports. Practically all Americans approved of this reduction, not because it would bring them in return the exclusive control of the Cuban market for food stuffs, textiles, and machinery, but for grave reasons of national prestige and good faith. Some powerful "interests," however, opposed not only that but any measure of relief. The beet-sugar, the cane-sugar, and the tobacco growers joined forces in a determined and brilliantly

captained "lobby." Behind them and more or less openly in sympathy with them, stood the Republican stalwarts proclaiming that in Cuban reciprocity they detected the cloven hoof of "tariff-revision." The Democrats seized gleefully on the chance to drive a wedge into their opponents' ranks, and in the end relief was withheld, the President beaten, and his party torn in two. The most popular President that the United States has yet possessed had failed to pass through Congress a simple act of justice which had the enthusiastic backing of nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand Americans. This, too, in spite of the fact that both Houses were controlled by his own party. Mr. Roosevelt alone came out of the discreditable fiasco strengthened in the esteem of the people. He fought for the right with unwavering firmness; he is fighting for it still; and in the long run, no doubt, he will triumph. But he has not triumphed yet.

This gives some measure of the difficulties ahead of him in raising the far more hazardous question of the Trusts. In spite of all we hear of them, the Trusts are not a political issue. Both parties, Republicans no less heartily than Democrats, abuse them in public and pummel them in their State and national "platforms," and both parties support and are supported by them in private. Neither dare take too open a line for fear of alienating the campaign contributions of which these gigantic corporations may well afford to be prodigal. Neither party up to the present has evolved anything that could be called a Trust policy. Both are playing for position. At the same time the connection between the Trusts and the Republican party is popularly supposed to be more intimate than between the Trusts and the Democrats. This is partly because the Republicans are,

broadly speaking, the rich man's party, the friends of capital if not its slaves, and the upholders of a tariff for protection. Whatever vague fear there is of the Trusts, and there is a good deal, all the ignorance of them and, therefore, all the prejudice against them, all the tales that are told of their "conscienceless" methods and underground influence on politics, give aid and comfort to the Democrats rather than to their opponents. And on paper and during election time the Democrats are undoubtedly the more violently hostile of the two. Whether the responsibilities of office, if they could get it, would not soften down their enmity is another question. In their present position of greater freedom they have at any rate put forward one proposal that within certain narrow limits might be efficacious, had they the chance and the courage to apply it. They suggest that the import duties should be taken off every article the production and distribution of which are controlled by a Trust. There is at least something definite in this proposal, something indeed far more definite than the Republicans, if left to themselves, would venture to suggest. Their instinct, or the instinct of their leaders, is to let well enough alone, to do nothing that will "disturb business." It is their attitude both towards Trusts and Tariff Revision; and President Roosevelt never gave clearer proof of his boldness than when he declined to allow his party to be muzzled on either question. Mr. Bryan's appeals to fear and hatred, his furious yell of "Destroy the Trusts!" his avowed ambition to "put stripes on the millionaires," are things that the Trust magnates, knowing the conservatism of their countrymen, can afford to laugh at. It is different when a man of Roosevelt's character and position, sanely and conservatively but with a terrible resoluteness,

brings the question on to the carpet. The President knew well enough what he was risking, the enmity of capitalists, disaffection and possibly revolt in his party, perhaps his own chance of re-election. But he saw the danger of leaving the Anti-Trust movement to be exploited by the fanaticism of Mr. Bryan and his followers; and he saw that that danger was increased by the silence and inactivity of the Republicans and the bewildered state of the public mind. He therefore took up the question himself not as an enemy of capital, but in the interests of capital, to save it from an unjust and disastrous assault. His general view of the evolution of modern business has been expressed over and over again. He does not believe that it is possible or desirable to go back from the large organizations to small ones in ordinary industry, nor yet from large railway systems to a discordant tangle of ill-connecting and desperately competing small lines. The age of competition, he realizes, has passed or is passing. At the same time he has come to the conclusion that the natural tendency towards amalgamation has been proceeding too rapidly, that there is serious danger in the prevalence of over-capitalization; and that "methods of governmental regulation" ought to proceed step by step with the development of new business conditions. "Governmental regulation," because State regulation has been tried and proved useless. What then does he advocate? Nothing new, nothing revolutionary. The one definite proposal he has put forward is that the same publicity should be demanded of the Trusts as is now exacted from banks and insurance companies. "The first thing to do," he has said, "is to find out the facts; and for this purpose publicity as to capitalization, profits and all else of importance to the public, is the most useful measure.

The mere fact of this publicity would of itself remedy certain evils, and as to the others, it would in some cases point out the remedies, and would at least enable us to tell whether or not certain proposed remedies would be useful. The State acting in its collective capacity would thus first find out the facts, and then be able to take such measures as wisdom dictated." Whether the State has the power to demand such publicity is a matter for the Supreme Court to decide. Complete authority to regulate and control the affairs of great industrial corporations would seem to require a Constitutional amendment. If so, the President advocates such an amendment; and that is as far in the way of positive suggestion as he has gone. That there is nothing very radical in all this may be shown by two facts. One is that the House of Representatives has already expressed itself in favor of the sort of Constitutional amendment that the President desires to see passed. The other is that one of the biggest corporations of all, the Steel Trust, has voluntarily discarded the old policy of mystery, and now presents to the public each year a straightforward and intelligible statement of its gross earnings by months, its expenditures, its profits, and its disposition of the net gains. At the same time, the President does not hesitate to use such powers as are conferred on him by the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. He has already haled the Northern Securities Company before the Courts on the ground that its consolidation of two competing railway systems was "an unlawful combination or conspiracy to monopolize, or attempt to monopolize, trade or commerce"; and he has also directed the Attorney-General to inquire into the so-called Beef Trust. "I am far," he admirably said, "from being against property when I ask that the question



of Trusts be taken up. I am acting in the most conservative sense in property's interest. When a great corporation is sued for violating the Anti-Trust law, it is not a move against property; it is a move in favor of property, because when you can make it evident that all men, big and small alike, have to obey the law, you are putting the safeguard of law around all men." And from the same sober standpoint he defends the proposed Constitutional amendment. "I am well aware that the process of Constitutional amendment is necessarily a slow one, and one into which our people are reluctant to enter, save for the best of reasons; but I am confident that in this instance the reasons exist. I am also aware that there will be difficulty in framing an amendment which will meet the objects of the case and yet will secure the necessary support. The very fact that there must be delay in securing the adoption of such an amendment ensures full discussion and calm consideration on the whole subject and will prevent any ill-considered action."

This is the entire sum of the President's policy, and obviously it does not carry us very far. Could it be put into practice it would combat but one of the Trust evils, that of over-capitalization. It would protect the stockholder and the investing public, but it would hardly touch the consumer. And it is as a consumer and purchaser of the Trust's goods and products that the average American is chiefly interested in the problem. What he dreads more than anything else is the power of the Trusts to raise the prices of the prime necessities of life; and it is for this reason that he is gravitating more and more towards the possibility of hitting them by means of the tariff. The President, however, while not opposed to a mild form of tariff revision *per se*,

emphatically maintains that it has nothing to do with the Trusts. "The question of regulating the trusts with a view to minimizing or abolishing the evil existent in them is separate and apart from the question of tariff revision. . . . The real evils connected with the Trusts cannot be remedied by any change in the tariff laws." That is trenchant, but is it true? Granted that the smaller competitors—very few of the Trusts are complete monopolies—would be swallowed up by a removal of the tariff duties on their industries, and that the Trusts would thereby become monopolies in fact, it is still possible to think that the unrestricted competition of foreign goods and products would force a certain maximum of prices beyond which it would be dangerous to advance. On the whole the chief value of the President's intervention in the Trust issue is this: he has brought sobriety, caution and sincerity to bear on a question in the discussion of which these three qualities have been woefully deficient. He does his own thinking, and he means business; and the people, who are at once anxious and utterly befogged, believe in him implicitly. Whether as the result of his campaign anything will get itself written on the Statute Book is quite another matter. The people, as I have said, dearly love a leader; but the politicians do not, and I am not sure that the Constitution wholly approves of one. It will be one of the most interesting features of Mr. Roosevelt's Presidency to see whether his methods succeed in getting things done as speedily as Mr. McKinley's. That they are more inspiring to watch is beyond argument; but the Presidential disabilities set forth at the beginning of this article make one question whether there is really room in the American system for a President of Mr. Roosevelt's resoluteness and vigor. So far it must be said that

the first year of President Roosevelt has been a personal rather than a political triumph. But that personal triumph is so supreme that the victory

of his party in the forthcoming elections ought properly to be called a Rooseveltian and not a Republican victory.

*Sydney Brooks.*

*The Monthly Review.*

## OWLS.

There is no bird which, in view of its strange and solitary character, its weird and hollow cries, the grotesque solemnity of its appearance, the time-honored beliefs and superstitions which cluster round it, the large part it plays in poetry ancient and modern, as well as in its sister arts, sculpture and painting, the marvellous adaptations of its structure to its mode of life, or its mode of life to its structure—above all, perhaps I ought to add, in these days of agricultural depression and of armies of destroying rats, its usefulness to the struggling cultivator of the soil—possesses so peculiar a fascination, and ought to enjoy so jealous and zealous a protection, as the various species of the owl.

I purpose in this paper to touch lightly on some of these points of interest, in the hope that I may be able to impart to those who read it some fragments of the pleasure which a loving and life-long observation of its subject has given to me, and may induce all who are connected directly or indirectly with the land, to befriend a bird which, in spite of many prejudices and some appearances to the contrary, is, in the truest sense, the friend of man.

I will premise only that my field of observation has been chiefly confined to the county of Dorset, to the neighborhood of the little village in which I was born and bred, West Stafford—to the grammar school at Blandford

where I received the first part of my education, and whose headmaster, the Rev. J. Penny, encouraged all his pupils, both by precept and example, to become, in their measure, observers of Nature—and to the old-world manor house of Bingham's Melcombe, in which, now that the main work of my life as a master at Harrow is over, I hope to end my days, a veritable sanctuary of wild life and of "my feathered friends." I shall confine what I have to say chiefly to the three more familiar varieties of the bird which are to be found in England—the white, the brown, and the long-eared owl. Nature varies indeed, but within strict limits; and what is true of the owl in the county of Dorset is true, with very slight modifications, of the owl in all parts of England—and, indeed, in all parts of the world.

All owls have much in common. The difference in their appearance—caused by the fact that some of their number (as, for instance, the eagle, the long-eared, and the short-eared owl) have little tufts of feathers on the top of their heads which they can raise or depress at pleasure, and which look like ears or horns or egrets—is a merely superficial difference. They are, each and all of them, unlike all other birds. A child who has never seen one except in a picture, and who knows perhaps hardly any birds beyond the sparrow, the robin, and the barndoor fowl, never fails instantly to recognize an

owl. An English child, perhaps I ought rather to say; for "the child is father of the man," and a German child could hardly be expected to recognize an owl at sight, if it be true, as the story goes, that a German professor on a visit to England, who had somehow succeeded in shooting an owl, holding up his trophy in triumph, exclaimed, "Zee, I have shot a schnipe mit einem face Push-cats."

The nocturnal movements of the owl tribe; the upright position in which they habitually hold themselves; the big, rounded head; the full, round, prominent eyes, which, except when they are glazed with sleep, look you full in the face, for the simple reason that, unlike those of all other birds, they are planted in front, rather than at the side of the head; the successive bands of short soft feathers which surround the eye, all pointing inwards, and so making it the centre, as it were, not of one, but of many circles; the fluffy feathers of the body, which make the whole appear twice as large as it really is (for an owl, though he will gorge, or try to gorge, a full-sized rat, is always thin—nothing, in fact, but skin and bones and feathers); the sleepy air of contemplation or of wisdom, which probably made the Athenians regard it as the sacred bird of Pallas; the eyelid behind eyelid which passes swiftly, now one, now another, over the eye, shielding it from the garish light of day, and tempering the apparent gravity of its thought by a suspicious though superficial resemblance to a wink; all mark off the subject of this paper in all its species from all other birds.

The white owl is so called because, though the whole of his upper plumage is of a delicate buff or yellow speckled with gray (as his Latin name, *Strix flammea* implies), it is the pure white of the lower plumage which most strikes the eye as he sails noise-

lessly over a stubble field or along a hedge. He is known also as the barn and the screech owl—the barn owl from one of his favorite haunts; the screech owl because of his rasping, piercing shriek, so unlike to the deep, mellow, musical hoot of his nearest relations. As he is the best known, so he is the best worth knowing, and the most useful of all his tribe. When left unmolested, as he ought to be, he becomes almost domestic in his habits, cruising around the rickyard or the homestead in search of his prey, and often taking temporary refuge, should the morning light surprise him, in any tumble-down shed which is near at hand. The resort which he most frequents is a dark cobwebbed barn in which corn or newly or badly threshed straw is stored, for thither troop rats by scores and mice by hundreds, and there, ready for the farmer's greatest foe, is the farmer's truest friend, prepared to destroy the destroyers. There he stands, bolt upright, perched on one leg, perfectly motionless, in some dark niche or on some lofty rafter, to all appearance fast asleep. But he sleeps with one eye or one ear open. There is a slight movement, invisible to the human eye—a slight rustle, inaudible to the human ear, in the straw below. In a moment he is all eye, all ear. The tucked-up leg joins the other; the head is bent forward and downward; the dark, bright eyes gaze with an almost painful intensity on the spot from which the rustle comes. The mouse or rat shows itself, and in a moment again, without one movement of his wings and without one tremor of the air, he "drops" upon his prey. There is hardly a struggle or a cry; his long, strong, sharp talons—and no bird of his size has such long, such strong, and such sharp talons—have met in the vitals of his victim, and he flies back with it grasped tightly in them to his coign of vantage, after a fitting

interval of meditation bolts or tries to bolt it whole, and then patiently waits for another rustle. From such a retreat, well stored with grain and well garrisoned with rats and mice, he rarely, except for purposes of getting water, needs to stir. But he is almost equally at home in the hollow of some immemorial oak or ash or elm, where he or his forefathers have dozed for decades or for centuries, or in the "ivy-mantled tower," where he may "mope" to his heart's content,

and to the moon complain  
Of such as, wandering near his sacred  
bower,  
Molest his ancient, solitary reign.

Or as Tennyson, always true to Nature in his mention of birds, puts it—

Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

I have found the white owl "at home" in many such belfries, where he has often allowed me to handle him rather than shake off his drowsiness and trust himself to the light of day. I have often wondered what a bird with so exquisitely elaborated and sensitive an organ of hearing as he has, can do when the Sunday-morning bells ring out, with all their reverberations, within a few feet of him. Can he, by closing the *operculum* or valve with which Nature has supplied him, sufficiently deaden the ding-dong bell? Or has he learned, as the result of long-transmitted experiences, that the agony, though sharp, is short? Or, like the more intelligent dog—who often knows that he must put on his best manners when Sunday comes—does he realize that, on each returning seventh day, the belfry is no resting-place for him and his? I throw out these suggestions merely for what they may be worth.

When found at home, he moves his head slowly from side to side with an

air of ineffable gravity. Burleigh's nod was nothing to it. Should he be of a more combative disposition, he utters a prolonged hiss, or snaps loudly with his beak, and flings himself on his back, with claws drawn up, ready to fasten them in the hand of his "interviewer," or in the thick leather glove with which, if prudent, he will have enveloped it. When he has planted them there, he has done his little best, and submits with an almost Christian resignation to his fate, and straightway falls fast asleep in your hand. Now is the time to examine the marvellous mechanism of the ear, which is entirely hidden from view by the feathers which encompass it. It will take you long to find; but blow the feathers apart, just beyond the outermost circle of those which gird in the eye, and you will find that your fingers have been close to it all the time. You will find an enormous semi-circular orifice, many times as large in proportion as the human ear, with a ring of little downy feathers gently curving inwards, closely set, and so serving, doubtless, to carry the most delicate pulsations of sound to the large and highly developed brain. The blowing may have slightly disturbed his equanimity, and he may, perhaps, have half opened one eye; but the moment it stops, you will find that, like the famous fat boy in *Pickwick*, he is "fast asleep again."

When his home is in a tree with a large hollow in it, you will often find that at the bottom of the hole is a soft conglomerate mass, perhaps a bushel or two in quantity, of what were once neat oblong balls or pellets containing the indigestible portions of his food—the fur and bones and feathers, that is, of the animals which he has swallowed. These a wonderful provision of Nature—as in the case of a few other birds, like the kestrel and the kingfisher, which bolt their food whole

—enables him to disgorge with violent and repeated efforts from his throat; and, when examined, they give incontestable proof, which even a game-preserver or gamekeeper cannot fail to understand, of his great services to man and of his complete innocence of the sins, the destruction of young partridges and pheasants, which have been laid to his charge. These pellets are found in their more perfect shape on the branches of the tree in which the female is nesting, or on the ground round it, as well as on the branches of the adjoining tree in which her faithful mate keeps watch and ward. In this small, soft, damp concrete of fur and bones I have sometimes found imbedded large numbers of the hard wing-cases of beetles or of cockchafers, a species of prey which few would have suspected the white owl of much affecting. The Germans are great statisticians, and a German naturalist, Dr. Altum,<sup>1</sup> has carefully analyzed a large number of owl pellets. In 706 pellets of the barn owl he found the remains of 2,525 rats, mice, shrews, bats, and voles, and of only twenty-two small birds, chiefly sparrows; and the results were similar in the case of the two other owls of which I am writing. A dog, it is said, cannot remain in good health without bones; and the bones and fur of rats and mice, however indigestible themselves, seem a necessary aid to the digestive process in an owl. Feed a tame white owl on flesh from which these have been removed, and he will soon pine away and die.

The method in which a tame white owl—and if a tame, then probably also a wild one—disposes of a mouse which he has caught is curious. He holds it for a minute or two by its middle, then, by a quick jerk of the head, throws it into the air, and catches it

by its head. A second jerk sends it head foremost down his throat, with the exception of the tail, which remains hanging out for another minute or two of appropriate contemplation, when, on a third jerk, it disappears.

Another peculiarity of the barn owl may be mentioned here. Alone, I believe, among birds, she sometimes lays her eggs not continuously, day by day, but at considerable intervals of time. At first, it may be, she lays two eggs, on which she will sit for a week or two; then, two more; and then, when she has hatched the first two, perhaps, another three. So that you may find fresh eggs, hard set eggs, and young birds fairly grown in the same nest. What is the reason of this peculiarity—a peculiarity almost as strange as that of the cuckoo, which by laying its eggs in another bird's nest, and leaving them to be hatched and reared by the foster-parent, has attracted universal attention, and seems to make a real breach in the continuity of Nature? Is it that by leaving the later eggs to be hatched, in part at least, by the warmth of the young birds, she has more leisure, by an all-night's absence, to satisfy the cravings of her voracious brood? The owlets, thickly covered with the softest white down, and looking like so many puff-balls with brilliant dark eyes inserted in them, remain in the nest for many weeks, and are the unceasing care of the parent birds. A mother often loves best those of her children who give her most trouble and anxiety. Most young birds begin to shift for themselves within a week or two of their birth, and family life ceases altogether a week or two later again, except in the case of a few birds, like the titmouse or the magpie, which enjoy or endure the pleasurable pains of a family till the next spring comes round. Some few birds, like the young partridge, the young peewit, and the young wild-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Yarrell, "British Birds," vol. 1.



duck, begin to "kick over the traces" as soon as they are born. They run off, as the saying is, with the egg-shell on their backs. They rush about over the grass or the water, pick up grubs or gnats, and squat down into their smallest or scuttle away into the nearest place of refuge at the first note of alarm given by the anxious mother. Young owls, on the contrary, which I have left in the nest newly born at Bingham's Melcombe at Easter, I have found still in the nest and unable or unwilling to fly, when I have returned there nine or ten weeks later. If indeed the love of a mother is generally proportioned to the trouble she has taken in rearing her children, how great must be the affection of the barn owl for her brood, and how vast the quantity of rats or mice which she must have carried during those long weeks to them!

Waterton, a close observer of bird life, says in his charming *Essays* that a pair of barn owls which he watched would bring a mouse to their nest every ten or fifteen minutes, and that in sixteen months they deposited over a bushel of pellets in the old gateway which they inhabited; while Gilbert White, the prince of all observers, whose letters will be a joy for ever to the naturalist—ever old and ever new—writes thus of the habits of the barn owl, which he carefully watched:

We have had, ever since I can remember, a pair of white owls that constantly breed under the eaves of this church. As I have paid good attention to the manner of life of these birds during their season of breeding, which lasts the summer through, the following remarks may not, perhaps, be unacceptable. About an hour before sunset (for then the mice begin to run) they sally forth in quest of prey, and hunt all round the hedges of meadows and small enclosures for them, which

seem to be their only food. In this irregular country we can stand on an eminence and see them beat the fields over like a setting-dog, often dropping down in the grass or corn. I have minuted these birds with my watch for an hour together, and have found that they return to their nest, the one or other of them, about once in five minutes, reflecting at the same time on the adroitness that every animal is possessed of as far as regards the well-being of itself and offspring. But a piece of address which they show when they return loaded should not, I think, be passed over in silence. As they take their prey with their claws, so they carry it with their claws to their nest: but as the feet are necessary in their ascent under the tiles, they constantly perch first on the roof of the chancel, and shift the mouse from their claws to their bill, that the feet may be at liberty to take hold of the plate on the wall as they are rising under the eaves.\*

How simple is this record, how fresh, how redolent of the countryside, how instinct with that nameless charm which defies analysis, but which has made the name of Gilbert White to be a name of honor and of love with all the English-speaking peoples, and has made, and will, doubtless, continue to make, his little Hampshire village of Selborne, with its Wakes, its Plestor, its beech-crowned Hanger, its Wolmer Pond and its Wolmer Forest—above all, the simple tombstone with the letters "G. W." inscribed upon it—to be a place of pilgrimage, ay, of almost religious pilgrimage, to all lovers of Nature for ever!

The eggs of the owl tribe, like those of the pigeon, are always white; but while no pigeon ever lays more than two, the owl lays from four to six eggs; and while the eggs of the pigeon are bright and glossy, those of the owl are a dull, chalky white, so rough in

\* White's "Selborne" letter llll.

texture that an experienced bird's-nester can tell by feeling alone, before he sees them, the nature of the prize he has reached at the bottom of a hole.

The names of animals which have a distinctive cry are almost always onomatopœic; that is to say, they imitate more or less successfully the cry. And the cries of the owl in its various species are so strange, and, heard as they generally are at dead of night, they take such strong hold of the imagination, that one might be sure beforehand that they would receive among various peoples many apt or sonorous names. Such names, to take only a few from the vocabularies of widely scattered nations, without distinguishing the species, are the *σκῶψ*, the *γλαύξ*, the *νυκτικόραξ* (night-raven) of the Greeks; the *strix*, the *bubo*, the *ulula* of the Romans; the *kôa*, the *kippôz*, the *yamshoop* of the Hebrews; the *hibou* of the French; the *hornugle* or *strougle* of the Danes, the Swedes, and the Norwegians; the *bufo* or *mofo* of the Portuguese; the *allocco* of the Italians; and, best perhaps of all, the *bu-ru-ru* of the Arabs.

The white owl screeches, snaps, snorts, snores, squawks, hisses; but it is now, I think, established that he never hoots. He utters his piercing shrieks chiefly when he is on the wing in the gloaming. The other sounds proceed generally, I believe, from the young brood of different ages while they are still in the nest or perching on the branches hard by, and when, in the owl-light, they are about to make some of their earliest essays at flight. Little wonder is it that country folk, hearing in the dusk this uncanny medley of strange noises proceeding from an ivied tower or a primeval oak or beech, should hear them with something akin to awe, and should regard the appearance and the cry of the bird from which it comes—as it has

more or less at all times and places, and in every species of literature, been regarded—as the harbinger of calamity, of disease, and of death.

The interest attaching to the actual habits of the owl as we know him now, is not lessened, it is enhanced, by knowing a little of what man has thought about him in former times and how he has treated him.

"Out on ye owls," says the usurping murderer, King Richard the Third, to the messengers who, one after another, like the messengers to Job, bring him in ever fresh tidings of deserved danger, desertion, and disaster—

Out on ye owls, nothing but songs of death.

The Hebrew prophet pictures with patriotic agony his native city Jerusalem, with patriotic pride her oppressor Babylon, given over to be habited—as, indeed, it still is, and as places like Jericho, Petra, Baalbek, Palmyra are—by owls and by what he regards as their proper associates:

Their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there . . . the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it . . . and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls . . . and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow; there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.\*

When Herod Agrippa entered the Theatre at Cæsareæ clad, as the Jewish historian Josephus puts it, in a robe of silver tissue, on which the sun shone down with all his radiance, it was an owl which suddenly perched upon a rope above his head and

\* Isaiah xlii. 21 and xxxiv. 11-15.

warned him of his coming end—the end which had befallen the Syrian conqueror Antiochus Epiphanes, the Roman Sulla, and his own ancestor Herod the Great—the most terrible of all deaths, that of being devoured alive by worms, “the tyrant’s death.”

The owl fares ill, too, in Classical countries and throughout Classical literature. Athens, indeed, was an exception, for the “little passerine owl,” which is much more lively and active in his motions than others of his species, and was so common there that “owls to Athens” became as proverbial an expression as our “coals to Newcastle,” was regarded as the sacred bird of Athena—

Athena’s solemn snapping fowls

—and its figure was stamped on the silver coins of the country, which were called for that reason “owls of Laurium.” More than this, the goddess herself is believed to have been sometimes represented with an owl’s head, the true meaning, it is now surmised, of the famous Homeric epithet for her.

But if Athens was an exception to the general prejudices about the owl, it was only an exception which proved the rule. “Loathsome,” “moping,” “unclean,” “ill-omened”—such are the stock epithets which are applied to it. It was an owl, as Virgil sings, that, perching upon the housetop at Carthage, predicted the desertion, the desolation, the death of Dido. It was an owl that, amongst other portents, predicted the death of Cæsar.

And yesterday the bird of night did sit,  
Even at noonday, upon the market-place,  
Hooting and shrieking.

It was into the form of an owl, when the day of destiny had come, that the Fury sent by Juno transformed her-

self, and by flitting with shrieks before the face, and by flapping with her wings upon the shield, of the ill-fated Turnus, paralyzed him with terror, just as he was about to enter on his final conflict with Æneas, for the plighted hand of Lavinia.

No incantation in mediæval times was deemed likely to be successful unless the “boding owl” shrieked assent. The “owlet wing” was as potent an ingredient as the blind worm’s sting or the nose of Turk or Tartar’s lips in the hell-broth of the witches’ caldron on Forres Heath. And when the deed of darkness was all but perpetrated in Macbeth’s castle upon the sleeping Duncan,

It was the owl that shrieked; a fatal bellman  
Which gives the stern’st good-night.

Perhaps the peculiar shape of the white owl’s face—heart-shaped when he is awake, elongated and thinner when he is asleep, and only becoming round, like other owls, after he is dead—marked him out for special suspicion and dislike. He perished almost as much for his supposed virtues as for his supposed vices. Different parts of his body were believed to possess different magical powers; and, strangely enough, the very same organ was believed to possess different powers at different times. His heart if carried into battle acted as a charm, inspiring valor and averting danger; while if laid on the heart of a sleeping man, it caused him to divulge his secrets. The magnificent snowy owl, sometimes a visitant to England, but whose proper habitat is the eternal snows of the north, was supposed to possess peculiar powers of prophecy. In the most solemn assemblies of the North American Indians it is said that the priest or medicine-man conceals his own head and shoulders within the

head and skin of the snowy owl.<sup>4</sup> It is perhaps a fitting garb for the seer to whose prophetic insight the stirring present is not more visible than the remote past and the dim and distant future.

In Morocco the Jews and Arabs, who hate and differ from each other in almost every other respect, agree in their belief about the owl. They believe that the owl is the bird of Satan, and that his shriek causes the death of infants—a catastrophe they strive to avert by reiterated curses or by copious libations of water in the courts of their houses.<sup>5</sup> And Ovid, who in his *Fasti* describes the leading characteristics of the owl in two lines as well as they ever have been described—

Grande caput; stantes oculi; rostra  
apta rapinae;  
Canities pennis, unguibus hamus  
adest

—goes on to tell us, in curious agreement with the superstitions of Morocco, how, in ancient times at Rome, it was believed that witches were able by their magic arts to transform themselves into screech owls, or screech owls to transform themselves into witches, and that, entering the window of the nursery in which young infants were asleep, they sucked their life-blood, as they lay in their cradles. Little wonder that, with such sins laid to its charge, an unlucky owl which blundered into a Roman house was nailed, alive and struggling, to the house door, to avert the evil that it would have wrought.

We may dismiss with a sigh or smile the record of such acts of stupid cruelty, hoping, perhaps, that, like other things which are said to have happened so long ago, they may not, after all, be true. But is the conduct

of a game-preserver of the present day one whit less stupid or less cruel when, in spite of our better knowledge, he allows his gamekeeper to set a trap upon a pole for anything and everything that he is pleased to call "winged vermin," leaving often the unfortunate owl—whose characteristic it is while in pursuit of his prey to perch upon any solitary post of vantage that presents itself—to perish there by inches, with head downwards, in unutterable agonies, and then pays him so much per head for the ghastly trophies of his murderous skill, nailed, if not, as the Romans did, to the door of his house, at least to an adjoining gibbet? The curious use made, on one occasion, of one of these barbarous trophies—but little thanks to the murderer for it—may be mentioned here. A swallow fashioned her clay and straw-built nest, laid her eggs, and hatched her young, on the skeleton, and between the wings, of a luckless barn owl, which had been nailed to a rafter, as if in cruel mockery, in its own barn.

Curiously enough, the owl is as unpopular amongst birds as he is the victim of prejudice, ignorance, superstition, cruelty amongst men. He seems to be under a ban. "There is some sad secret," well says Mr. Evans in his volume on *The Songs of Birds*, "which we do not know, which no bird has yet divulged to us, and which seems to have made him an outcast from the society of birds of the day. He is branded with perpetual infamy."

Not a bird of the forest e'er mates  
with him,<sup>6</sup>

All mock him outright by day,  
But at night, when the woods grow  
still and dim,  
The boldest will shrink away.\*

<sup>4</sup> Stanley's "Familiar History of Birds," p. 145.

<sup>5</sup> Dresser's "Birds of Europe," vol. v.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted by H. G. Bull in "Notes on the Birds of Herefordshire," p. 110.

Should he be disturbed by any accident from his resting-place by day, he is straightway mobbed by a motley crowd of clamorous birds—rooks, starlings, missel-thrushes, song-thrushes, blackbirds. He sits stock-still amongst them; his eyes dazed by the light; his ears deafened by their cries; his feelings outraged, we may well believe, by their insults. "Hit him hard; he has no friends," seems to be their maxim. He flies blundering from tree to tree, unable to shake off his persecutors, who do not cease to molest him till he can find a hollow tree to hide himself from their view, or till the shades of evening make him once more at home.

One more proof, if such be needed, may be given here that the barn owl, if other birds are enemies to him, is no enemy to them. What was once thought to be the most damning evidence against him turns out, on further investigation, to be the clearest testimony in his behalf. It has long been known that he sometimes selects for his habitation one of those picturesque dovecotes which are among the chief charms of the old-world manor houses of England, and no meaner an observer than Gilbert White was inclined to put down the wholesale destruction of the young pigeons within it to this self-invited guest. He occupied, it was thought, one niche in the columbarium that he might feed freely on the young occupants of the adjoining niches! But another observer of Nature, Waterton (who will always be remembered with gratitude by lovers of birds for the protection which, on the principle—the only true principle—of "live and let live," and of so preserving the balance of Nature, he gave on his own estate to those interesting and beautiful birds of prey, such as hawks and magpies, which were persecuted elsewhere), showed by careful observation of his own dove-

cote, which a pair of barn owls had adopted as their own, that "the saddle had been laid on the wrong horse." From the moment that he was able to exclude rats from his dovecote there was no further massacre of the innocents; and, henceforward, both barn owls and pigeons lived, and laid their eggs, and hatched and reared their young, as members of one happy family. Pigeons do not mob the barn owl who lives amongst them, because they know him well. Other birds do mob him, because, being a bird of night and quite unlike themselves, they hardly know him at all. A boy at school who is quite unlike other boys, who takes a line of his own, and has higher interests than those of athletics, is too often likely to be dubbed as "mad," and to have a bad time of it among his companions; and birds, in this particular, are not much ahead of boys.

It is a little hard upon a bird so aloof and inoffensive as the owl, so often molested by other birds, and so seldom molesting them in return, that it should have been selected by Tennyson as a type of the critics whom he affected to despise, and yet whom he too often allowed to make his life a burden to him:

While I live, the owls;  
When I die, the GHOULS.

From the arch enemy of the rat I pass once more to the rats themselves, that I may relate a curious experience of my own, of a few years ago, near my present home. One advantage of the cycle of the day to those who care for Nature as well as for the extent of ground which they can cover, is the way in which it enables its rider to steal quietly on the wild creatures which he loves to watch. He may pass, noticing but quite unnoticed, and pause as he passes, within a few feet of the hare, the rabbit, or the weasel,



of a covey of partridges, of a flock of wood-pigeons, of a family of magpies, and watch them at their ease and his own. I was tricycling homeward one evening from the village of Puddletown, near Dorchester, when I saw passing slowly across the lane in front of me, down one steep bank and up another, a creature which at first completely puzzled me. It had long, shaggy, grizzled hair, and everything about it betokened extreme old age. Its long hair, it may well be, made it appear at the time bigger than it really was, and, for the moment, I thought it must be a species of polecat. I now believe it to have been a rat, but a Nestor among rats—a Nestor who had lived, like its prototype, through some three generations of its kind. I stopped my tricycle short, wondering what this strange creature could be. It was closely followed by an ordinary rat, and then as though it were the Pled Piper of Hamelin, by another and another, and yet another, sometimes singly, sometimes in twos or threes. I watched for some time the ragged regiment till there was a pause in it, and then, dismounting, gently stirred the tufts of long grass or clumps of nettles on the bank whence it came. They concealed, nearly every one of them, a rat or a mouse. The bank was alive with them. With a stick I could have killed a dozen or more. They were evidently migrating in a body, as it is known that they sometimes do, and as their congener, the lemming, does, on an enormous scale and in the most mysterious circumstances, in Norway, till they plunge into the sea by thousands, and so, of their own free motion, redress the balance of Nature.

But what was the explanation of their uncanny leader? I will hazard one for what it may be worth. Animals which live in communities have been observed, from Homer and the

Cyclops' cave downwards, to have some sort of government amongst themselves. There is generally a bull that lords it over the herd, a ram that leads the flock, a stag that is the monarch of the glen. Bees have, of course, their queen; and it is not the lusty and the dashing, but the ragged-winged and, as Tennyson describes it,

The many-wintered crow which leads the clanging rookery home.

Why should not rats who take up their abode in some sort of community in an old country house, in a barn, in a rickyard, and who have, as Frank Buckland has shown, very considerable intelligence of their own, also "have a king and officers of sorts"? Why should they not choose the oldest and most experienced of their number to be their "guide, philosopher and friend"? I looked over the hedge into the field from which the procession had descended, and saw there a lot of cornstacks, with a threshing-engine, which, with all its paraphernalia, ready for use on the next morning, had apparently just arrived. My theory is that the uncanny creature was a "king of the rats," that the "eye of old experience" had taught him that the appearance of a threshing-engine was the prelude to disaster and massacre on the morrow, and that he gave, in right of his office, the signal to be off. If, as is well known, rats instinctively quit in a body an unseaworthy vessel before she puts out on her last voyage, if they quit a crazy tenement which is about to fall from lapse of time, or which, like the house of Eugene Aram, is pre-doomed by the gullt long successfully buried within it, but now on his wedding-morning to be revealed,<sup>1</sup> why should they not quit a rick under the guidance of per-

<sup>1</sup> See Bulwer Lyton's "Eugene Aram," Book V. ch. I.

haps the one survivor, or of the oldest of the survivors, of a previous massacre, and make off for the next group of ricks? I say again I put this forth only as an hypothesis, in the hope that some of those who read it, and are interested in it, may be able from their own experience to throw some light upon it, whether by way of confirmation or of refutation.

The other two owls of which I write, the long-eared and the brown, may be dismissed more briefly, for much that I have said of the white owl may, with some modifications, be said of them. The long-eared or horned owl is the rarest of the three, and is seldom to be seen, and still more seldom to be heard, except by those who look or listen carefully for it. It is, in the strictest sense of the word, a "woodlander." It inhabits deep, dark fir woods, where the sound of the woodman's axe is rarely heard, and where, if unmolested, the same pair, or their descendants, will go on living from generation to generation. It is within my own knowledge that they have done so in one such lonely wood on the edge of Knighton Heath for nearly half a century. By day, the long-eared owl remains perched on a branch close to the bole of a tree, with its body tucked up so tightly against it that it looks exactly like a knot or excrescence on its surface. It is rarely seen therefore till it is dislodged from its favorite position by a sharp tap with a stick at the base of the tree. But as it seldom flies, in its tumbling, sleepy fashion, more than some twenty or thirty yards away, and then pitches on the middle of a branch, you can often come on it again, and creep up so close to it that you can make out its distinguishing marks, its beautifully-mottled brown plumage, its ears or horns, which it can raise or depress at pleasure, and its eyes, which flash fire at you from their yellow irides. These

eyes he fixes steadily on you. Fix your eyes on him in turn, and walk slowly round him, first to the right and then to the left, in a full half-circle, and he will follow you with his, without moving his body, throughout. It is this peculiar habit of his, and of some of his allies, that has given birth, I fancy, to the Yankee or Indian legend that if you go round and round an owl of the country very slowly, with your eyes fixed on him, he too will go round and round, with his eyes fixed on you, till his head—which, in any case, is rather loosely affixed to his shoulders—drops off his body!

No owl has much building talent. The horned owl lays her five or seven white eggs, sometimes in an old squirrel's drey far out on the bough, sometimes in an old hawk's or crow's or magpie's nest, not caring to do anything to repair or make them comfortable. A clump of high fir-trees at the edge of a large expanse of down or heath, like Mayor Pond, or Yellowhan Wood or Badbury Rings in Dorset, is a favorite resort. Its single call-note of "hook, hook" is seldom heard except in summer when the evening is far advanced. But I remember well when, many years ago, I was climbing to a likely-looking nest in a big clump in the middle of the open Whitechurch Down, which contained at that very time (and oh! what a paradise of birds it was!) within its limited compass the nests of two other birds of prey—a sparrow hawk and a carrion crow—the weird and varied cries which proceeded from an adjoining tree, and which, accompanied by the strangest and most distressful motions and grimaces, betrayed the anxious solicitude of the mother's heart. The nest contained five young owlets covered with brown or yellow down, with eyes which were already at their brightest, and horns which were just beginning to appear. One of them I managed to rear, and a

very amusing and interesting pet he was. He would remain perched with eyes closed, apparently in sleep, the greater part of the day, but with a tiny slit left open, from which he could see as much as it behoved him to know; and when he opened them he did so with a serio-comic look of surprise and a "Why do you disturb me?" air, which remained upon them till they closed in semi-sleep again.

The sound made by the horned owl, as by the eagle owl—of which he is a miniature—and by which each of them is best known, is not a note at all. It does not proceed from the throat, but is occasioned by a smart clicking of the bill, the movement of the mandibles being so rapid that it can hardly be seen, even when one is watching it narrowly.

I have mentioned the eagle owl; and as he is met with as an occasional straggler in this country, and as I have kept successive pairs of them in an aviary at Harrow for many years, I must add a word or two about him. He is the most magnificent, I think, not only of the owls, but of all birds. The female, as is the case with many birds of prey—notably the peregrine falcon and the sparrow hawk—is a third larger than the male, and far surpasses him in every manly quality. She takes the lead throughout; she is everywhere and everything; he nowhere and nothing. Her talons have a terrible grip and strength. She has been known to kill a dog or a sheep, and to carry off a full-grown hare without much apparent trouble. When angered by the unceremonious approach of a visitor she lowers her head almost to the ground, moves it slowly from side to side in a long sweep, snaps loudly with her bill, quivers from head to foot with half-suppressed rage, and raises her wings in a vast circle above her body, each "particular" feather "standing on end," erect and distinct,

her eyes flashing fiercely the while, and turning from a yellow to a fiery red. But even when thus excited she will allow you, if you go cautiously to work, to get your hand above and behind her head, and, almost burying it in the soft fluffy feathers of her neck, gently to scratch her poll. *Considunt ira.*

A considerable number of these splendid birds were, for many years, kept in a fit abode for them, the ancient keep of Arundel Castle, the whole of which was netted in for the purpose, and allowed them to be observed in almost a state of nature. As you entered, and saw one and another of these truly regal birds sitting in each niche or window of the keep, in stately repose, you felt somewhat as the rude Gaul or as the envoy of Pyrrhus felt when he entered the Roman Senate, that it was an assemblage, if not of gods, at least of kings. A clump of trees and of thick bushes in the centre of the keep gave them such shade as they required—the eagle owl is not so exclusively nocturnal in its habits as the other owls, and will often take his prey by day—and the open space between it and the wall gave you ample room to observe the wide spread of their wings as they swept in their eerie flight noiselessly round and round. The finest of the whole assemblage was known by the strange name of "Lord Eldon." One of the daughters of the famous Lord Chancellor, entering one day the keep in ignorance of what was there, and catching sight of the venerable bird sitting in its post of state and blinking its eyes with all the sleepy majesty of the law, had exclaimed, "Dear me, how like papa!" The name thenceforward stuck to it; and, years afterwards, the butler whose business it was to see after the eagle owls, and who was not a little proud of his charge, rushed up, in a state of pleased excitement and of domestic importance, into the Duke of Norfolk's study.

"What is the matter?" said the Duke. "Please, your Grace," was the significant reply, "Lord Eldon has laid an egg."

The brown or tawny owl is as widely dispersed over England as the white, but being somewhat more of a woodlander, and its plumage being more sombre and inconspicuous, is less seen than her congener—less seen, but much more heard; for while the white owl's shriek is pretty well confined to the early hours after dusk, the "most musical, most melancholy" "tu-who-o-o" of the brown owl is to be heard, when he is properly protected, throughout the live-long night. His eyes are dark, round, and expressive; his feathers finely barred and extraordinarily soft and fluffy; yet they stand out nearly at right angles to his body, and so make it appear not merely larger, but much larger—perhaps twice as large as it really is. It is difficult to believe that Keats's famous line

The owl for all his feathers was a  
cold

can ever have been true of him. In his soft, silky, noiseless flight he stretches out his legs behind him, to serve, as Gilbert White remarked, as a balance to his heavy head. The female lays her five, almost perfectly round, eggs early in March in the deep hollow of a tree to which she sticks year after year. Her young are the queerest little balls of gray woolly down, and have been well compared to a "pair of Shetland worsted stockings rolled up," such as might have belonged to Tam O'Shanter.\* They remain long in the nest or perched just outside it, and when at last they have found their wings, they flit from tree to tree, constantly uttering their baby cry "tu-wheet, tu-wheet," while their ever anxious mother, by way of keep-

ing them together and assuring them, if they do not know it already, that she is always there, utters ever and anon her loud refrain "tu-who-o-o."

I would mock thy chaunt anew;  
But I cannot mimic it;  
Not a whit of thy tu-whoo,  
Thee to woo to thy tu-whit,  
Thee to woo to thy tu-whit,  
With a lengthen'd, loud halloo,  
Tu-whoo, tu-whit, tu-whit, tu-whoo-o-o.

When the brown owl hoots, her neck swells out, as old Gilbert White remarked, to the size of a hen's egg, and it is worth noting that, while most of the poets and almost all ordinary listeners regard her hoot as melancholy, and nothing but melancholy—just as the ancients regarded the song of the nightingale which, to our ears, is generally exuberant and ravishing in its joy—yet there is a minority among the poets which, on occasion, takes the other view; and it is a minority which deserves to be heard; Shakespeare, Sir Walter Scott, and T. Nash among the number. What says Shakespeare?—

When icicles hang by the wall  
And Dick the Shepherd blows his nail,  
And Tom bears logs into the hall  
And milk comes frozen home in pail;  
When blood is nipt, and ways be foul,  
Then nightly sings the staring owl,  
Tu-whoo!

Tuwhit! tu-whoo! a merry note!  
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot!

What says Sir Walter Scott?—

Of all the birds in bush or tree  
Commend me to the owl;  
For he may best ensample be  
To those, the cup that troubl.  
For when the sun hath left the west  
He chooses the tree that he loves the  
best  
And he whoops out his song, and he  
laughs out his jest.  
Then, though hours be late and weath-  
er foul,  
We'll drink to the health of the bonny,  
bonny owl.

\* Meyer's colored illustrations of "British Birds," vol. 1.

Once more, in his delightful poem on Spring, a poem which happens to have secured the first place in that best of all anthologies, the *Golden Treasury*, Nash couples the hoot of the owl with two at least of the most joyous sounds in nature, the "jug-jug-jug of the nightingale," and that of the wanderer "who tells his name to all the hills," the cuckoo—

Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's  
pleasant King:

Then blooms each thing, then maids  
dance in a ring,

Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds  
do sing,

Cuckoo, jug-jug, pee-wee, to-witta-  
woo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies  
kiss our feet.

Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning  
sit,

In every street these tunes our ears do  
greet

Cuckoo, jug-jug, pee-wee, to-witta-  
woo!

Spring; the sweet spring!

It is not quite clear to me what bird is indicated by the mysterious sound pee-wee. Can it be the peewit? which is most vocal in spring-time; for, as Tennyson tells us—

In the Spring, the wanton lapwing  
takes itself another crest.

Or can it be the baby owl? whose unformed plaint it resembles more closely. In the latter case, the owl will take not first class, but Double First class honors in the opinion of the poet as the author of two of the most inspiring and bewitching of sounds.

In any case, the brown owl makes one of the tamest, the most companionable, and the most solemnly amusing of pets. He has little of the inborn fierceness and suspicion of the other owls, and will very soon learn to perch quietly on your hand, or will even fol-

low you about over a lawn or through a shrubbery. One young brown owl, which I brought up from the nest, and which belonged, I believe, to the same storied pair of parent owls, of whom I will speak presently, was very partial to music, would make its way, through an open window on the ground floor, into the room in which a piano was being played, and would press closely against the instrument itself.

While the female brown owl is sitting, the male bird usually keeps watch and ward on an adjoining tree, ready to do battle, as the following anecdote will show, for her and hers against all comers. Many years ago, in the parish of Stafford, I was swarming up an elm-tree towards a large hole half-way up which seemed likely to contain some treasure-trove. When I was a few feet up, I felt a heavy blow in the middle of my back, as though my companion had thrown a clod of hard earth at me. Turning round, I saw a brown owl fly back to his post in an adjoining tree from whence he had made his descent upon me. I continued my climb, and the same attack was delivered with even greater force, a second and a third time. In the hollow, which at last I reached, I found the wife sitting in as undisturbed repose above her young as the pigeon which preserved Mohammed in the cave of Mount Hira from his pursuers, and so made the Hegira or "Flight" to be, for all time, the era of chronology in the vast Mohammedan world; and the husband, having, I suppose, sufficiently delivered his soul by his three charges, and thinking that there was nothing further to be done, and that no harm was meant, now looked on as calmly as his wife.

Owls, I believe, always pair for life, and their affection for one another is at least as marked as that for their young, as another touching anecdote—connected, I believe, with this very



same pair of birds—will prove. Some years later, I was tapping with my climbing-stick another elm-tree in this same field three hundred yards away, expecting to see a jackdaw hastily scuttle out of his hiding-place. Instead of that, a brown owl slowly poked its solemn-looking head out of the hole, and remained there looking down upon me with its big, mournful, dreamy eyes. I climbed the tree; it did not stir an inch. I lifted it gently out. Owls, as I have said, are always thin, not much else than feathers; but this one, from its weight, seemed to be feathers and nothing else at all. Its eyes slowly glazed; it turned over on its side, and died in my hand. I blew its fluffy feathers apart to see if I could unravel the mystery of its death. There was one tiny shot-hole in its skull, and on inquiry I found that some few weeks before, when an adjoining withy bed was being beaten for game, a boy, anxious, like others of his kind, to "kill something," had fired at a big brown owl which had come lumbering out of an ivy-tree, its winter resting-place. The bird had quivered as he struck it, but had not fallen to the ground, and, escaping for the time, had evidently been dying by inches ever since in the hollow in which I had found it; while her mate, faithful unto death, had kept her supplied with mice and rats, several of which, quite recently killed, I found therein and also stored in the hedge below.

There is no rule about nidification without an exception, and I have found a brown owl's eggs in two places so unusual as to be worth mentioning—one in the fork of a Scotch fir in Sayer's Wood, a few feet from the ground, with hardly flat space enough to hold the round eggs themselves; the other in a rabbit-hole in Knighton Wood, a few miles away. The food of the brown owl consists, in the main, of

rats and mice and the larger insects; but gamekeepers wage an unrelenting war upon him, because, as they assert, he, once in a way, takes a rabbit, a leveret, or a young pheasant. It is difficult to prove a negative, especially in the case of a bird which captures its prey by night; but young pheasants, till they can perch and take fair care of themselves, are safe beneath their mothers' or their foster-mothers' wings, and the evidence of the pellets is quite the other way. In any case, the amount of good he does, even from a game-keeper's narrow field of vision, immensely outweighs the harm. He falls only too easy a prey. His loud hoot constantly proclaims his presence, and a good imitation of it by the keeper's practised lips will bring down a brown owl from a remote part of the wood to a tree close at hand, where he can be picked off in the moonlight; and if that fails, there is still the fatal pole-trap always ready.

Cruelty is often ingenious. Dignity is the natural butt of the vulgar, and the solemn appearance of the brown owl—"most potent, grave, and reverend seigneur" that he is—combined with his queer habits and the beliefs which have been held about him, has, in the course of centuries, given him many strange experiences and brought him into many awkward situations. There was a time when kites were common in England, and performed, when there were no drains, the useful office of scavengers in our great cities. The romantic sport of falconry was then at its best; and when it was desired to bring the lumbering kite, the quarry of the falcon, within his view, it was the unlucky brown owl which was made to act as the lure. A fox's brush was tied to his legs; he was made to fly as best he could, and his uncouth appearance, acting on the curiosity of the kite—a very inquisitive bird—soon brought him within meas-

urable distance of his nobler foe.\* Italian bird-catchers, it is said, tether a brown owl to the ground in an open space surrounded by bushes, and the small birds that troop to mob him find themselves caught by the bird-lime with which the bushes have been plentifully smeared.

But a worse and still more unworthy fate even than this used to befall the brown owl among our own forefathers. The belief, still prevalent in country districts, that an owl perching on the windows of a house or hooting near it, presages the death of an inmate, marked him out for special persecution at the time of family gatherings, and the so-called "duck hunt" was a common accompaniment of Christmastide. It was on this wise. An owl was lashed to the back of a duck, and duck and rider were launched upon a pond. The brown owl is not altogether a stranger to water, for, unlikely as it seems, he has been frequently seen, as the Java fishing owl habitually does, to pounce upon a fish and carry it to his young. But he is well frightened now. He digs his talons deep into the duck, as Europa clung the faster to the neck of the bull which carried her over the sea when he plunged on purpose more deeply into it, to strengthen his hold. The terrified duck dives. The more she dives, the more he grips; the more he grips, the more she dives. A tame owl which has dipped itself in water, as he loves to do, is a lamentable sight enough. His fluffy feathers have lost all their fluffiness, and are glued to his side. His body, to all appearance, has shrunk to half its usual size. The water drips from his venerable countenance, his eyes stand out doubly, and his whole head seems little else but a pair of eyes and beak. He shivers from head to foot. But a voluntary ducking in a basin is one thing, an in-

voluntary and reiterated ducking in a duck pond by a duck which is tied fast to him is quite another. Each time the duck rises to the surface, the owl looks more pitiable, and is welcomed only by the pitiless laughter of the onlookers, till death by drowning puts an end to his sufferings.

A story related by H. L. Meyer, the well-known ornithologist, blends so closely the comic and the tragic elements, which are, as I have shown, so intermixed in the history of the owl, that I cannot help giving the drift of it here. The wife of his father's gardener had been for some time ill; and his father, one Sunday morning, passing by the cottage, noticed that the gardener and his two sons were dressed in black and to all appearance plunged in the deepest melancholy. He offered his condolences, but the husband hastened to explain that it was not the death of his wife; it was only the announcement of it, that he was deploring. A brown owl had flown, some nights before, over his cottage, and had hooted repeatedly in the back-yard. The garments of the family had long been shabby, and now that the death of the wife was imminent, he had thought that suits of mourning, if made at once, would serve for the next Sunday services, as well as for the more sombre service that was so soon to follow. Die the mother did very soon afterwards, and what between the "boding owl" and the mourning garments which were already worn for her, she must have died, one would think, many times before her death. Meyer does not say so, but I cannot help thinking that the gardener must have been a Scotchman. The dour, the grim humor of the scene, the making the best of both worlds, the delicious economy, domestic and religious—above all, the "Sabbath blacks"—all mark the story as coming from the north of the Tweed. Is it not some-

\* "My Feathered Friends," J. G. Wood, pp. 144, 145.

thing of a piece with the Scotchman who, when he had been condemned to death on the clearest evidence for the murder of his wife, and who when his Counsel, liking his looks, came to visit him in his condemned cell, and telling him that there was no hope of a reprieve, nor did he deserve it, asked him whether he could do anything further for him, replied: "Could you get me my Sabbath blacks to wear on the occasion?" "Yes," replied the Counsel; "but why on earth do you want them?" "It's just"—such was the rejoinder—"as a mark of respect for the departed."

Let me, before I conclude, lodge one more protest and make one more appeal against the pole-trap, which, though less common than it was, is still to be seen, a hideous appendage, in too many green rides in the game preserve and on too many picturesque knolls amidst the heather. Anyone who has seen, as I have done, a bird which is so interesting from every point of view, which lends such a charm by its flight and note to the evening hours, which is so charged with natural affection for its young and its belongings, hanging from a pole-trap with pleading, reproachful eyes, and perishing in prolonged agony when, as so often happens, the keeper has not cared to go his rounds, must feel his indignation and his compassion deeply stirred within him. If he does not take the law into his own hands in obedience to a higher law—as, I confess, I have often done—and, wilfully guilty of a petty larceny, fling the instrument of torture into a place where it will not be found again, he will at least feel that there is room for a new

branch of the "Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Society," and be anxious to join an "Anti-Pole-trap League"—a league against a practice which involves the horrors of the operating-room of the vivisectionist without any of the vivisectionist's excuse.

But, appeals to humanity apart, let me also once more point out to all connected with the land that self-interest, if no higher motive, demands the instant abolition of the pole-trap. Large portions of England, my own neighborhood amongst them, are at this moment being devastated by rats. No grain, no fruit is safe from them. The owl is their natural enemy, the check kindly placed by Nature—may we not say by God?—on their ravages. No owl can harbor within a mile or two of a pole-trap and live. Let it be anathema. The number of owls in the country has been terribly diminished. Let them be encouraged and protected in every way possible. Let the game-keeper be rewarded as I have rewarded him myself, with some success, not for the owls that he destroys, but for the owls that he preserves. From the nature of the case, their number can never be very large. Let the owl be regarded and protected in England as the stork is regarded and protected in Holland and other countries on the Continent. All parishes have once had—many parishes have still, and all may have again, if people will only be wise in time—one or more "owl trees," or owl barns, or owl belfries, which should be regarded, in the truest sense of the word, as "owl sanctuaries," where these fascinating and venerable benefactors of humanity may live inviolate from generation to generation.

R. Bosworth Smith.

## HIS CREED TWICE BROKEN.

The Lady Hester Gold Mine was going at its full strength, and with its full complement of hands. Ten head of stamps were vamping an accompaniment to almost any tune that you cared to put to them, and their echoes had the surrounding ranges all to themselves to play about in, for the Lady Hester was miles away from any other workings, save those of a few lonely prospectors, a transient population, who came and went in fitful endeavors to find something good in the neighborhood of the staunch and sterling little mine that had paid its way, and a good deal over, for some years. Three small poppet-heads that looked like strayed children of some of the immense structures you may see in a large mining centre marked the mouths of the shafts, while underground there was a very network of tunnels, drives, winzes, and stopes, all of which technical terms do not matter; they stand for lateral, diagonal, and other burrowings. What does matter, is, that two of these shafts were worked with "whips," the third with a "whim." In both of these the motive power is the usual intermediary between man-handling and steam, namely horse.

The whip-horse harnessed on to the end of a wire rope hauls up his bucket by walking straight out from the shaft, along a track that is the exact length of the depth from which he is hauling, and a trifle over. At the end of the trifle the topman, or landing brakesman, seizes the bucket by the edge, or handle, the horse backs, and the man swings the bucket, as it lowers, towards him, and lands it on the plat, or landing stage. The whim is quite different. A small place is cleared close to the shaft, half the size of a circus-ring. In the centre of this, upon

a pivot, is a round wooden drum standing perpendicularly. Horizontally on the drum is a thing that, when not in motion, looks like a large water-wheel that has laid itself down to rest, under the outside edge of which, and connected with it by a hanging iron bow that fastens on to his saddle, is the horse, who by continually marching in the same circle winds the rope round and round the wooden drum. When the bucket comes above the shaft the horse does not back, as in the case of the whip, but turns completely round, and takes a step or two in the opposite direction. In both cases if the shaft be an open one, that is to say does not have doors that close below it as the bucket rises above the mouth, the lives of the men below depend upon the topman, who must never bungle. His work is simple, it must also be perfect. The shafts at the Lady Hester were all open ones.

The boy that drove the whim horse was in a bad temper, and no wonder; for the thermometer stood at about 100° while the night before there had been a severe frost, and though he had blankets they were so thin and worn as to be almost useless.

"Below there!"

Not a shout, but a terrified scream. A quarter of a ton of stone in not much more than half a dozen lumps was hurtling down the shaft in an ever hurrying rush, bumping from side to side with dull crashes against the timber. The topman of the whim-shaft had thrown himself flat on his stomach. His head was hanging over the mouth of the shaft. Something seemed to be tearing at his throat, but he fought it down, and screamed once more before the concussions between stone and timber had ceased. Then

came silence, save for the jerky rhythm of the stamps down by the dam that seemed to the man to be hammering out his last words in contemptuous mockery. "Below there—below—below—below there," sang the stamps.

"Are you all right?"

He had to say this over many times in his head before the knowledge came to him that now no sound was coming from his lips, for his heart had come up into his throat and blocked everything.

"Are you all right—are you all right—all right—all right—all right!" sang the stamps, and then, not being fed properly, they ran away and whirled a wild iron laugh at him. Speechless, and with the total paralysis of fear, he lay with his head hanging over into the blackness.

Half an hour before he had hailed the two men below, and had been going to tell them that he felt clumsy at landing, that it was the first time he had ever landed from a whim, that the whim-horse was not turning as he should, and that if they liked he would go away and tell the manager to put somebody else in his place. But when they had answered his hail he had only asked them to send up a water-bag as his own was empty, and the sun, so he expressed it, was fairly jumping on him. It had suddenly occurred to him that he would only make the boy who led the horse round and round the monotonous little circle either angry or nervous. He could not bear the thought of being jeered at or laughed at by the boy, and it would be still worse to make him frightened.

From down below too they would probably only laugh at him, in a different way, and tell him to "buck up," with a few good-natured curses thrown in to emphasize the encouragement. And so he had gone on. Twice he had exasperated the boy by calling out the word of command "Turn," and then

adding "No don't, a little higher, please,"—for he was always polite—"now turn," and each of these times the heavy iron bucket had clanked against the edge, and he had barely saved it from spilling down the shaft. After this the thing had simply grown, and grown into a hideous sunlit nightmare. The strenuous toil of rolling and shifting the great weight to the edge of the "plat," and there tipping it over, somewhat relieved him each time it had to be done, but, as the one bucket went down, and he could hear, far below him, the end of the filling of the other, his legs began to feel cold, and he would have given the world and all things in it to turn and run, run far out into the quiet sea of ranges that stood in its ever stationary waves around this clamoring island of work. But he had stuck to it: that was his strong point—he had thought he would be able, but he knew now that he was not fit for the work—never had been—there was only another hour to do, then he would go to the manager, and tell him—ask him to give him something underground—he had been underground before, never more than fifty feet or so, but there could not be much difference in going deeper.

Meanwhile the crash came. Mingled hot and cold sweat had made a tepid rain in his eyes that blinded him at the crucial moment. He missed the handle of the bucket, and utterly confused the boy with a dozen different orders, all incoherent. The bucket dropped upon the edge of the shaft and tipped into it—and there he lay waiting. Below were two men; had he killed both of them, or only one? The blood of these men, their life blood—and he knew them both well, and liked them—had been hovering over him, between him and the blue sky, for hours—it was his doom to take it—why, one of those lumps would smash both their heads, if they happened to be close



together, to just a mere bony pulp. What should he have done? Should he have run away? His upbringing, a public school, some little soldiering, and a constant, fanatical desire to accomplish the task set him had kept him there—it was his creed, all that he had of a creed, and it was apparently all wrong; it was kicked over just as some burly ruffian might stamp upon a piece of old Dresden China, and then challenge the owner to prove that the bauble had been of any use. Tangled up in this rope of Duty he had hung himself—to himself—for all time.

He might have been lying there for seconds, or he might have been lying there for years, when a voice came up the shaft: "What the devil are you playing at? Bill and me was lighting our pipes in the tunnel, or we might 'ave run against one of them pebbles!"

The topman's head drooped and his limbs slackened. He had forgotten the tunnel and its chances. The order against smoking in the mine was so strict that few men cared to transgress it, and he knew that they had never been lighting their pipes at all, but had skipped into the tunnel just in time. It was their way of letting him down lightly. "Go ahead, sonny!" came up the voice again. "We'll stand from under when you land." Then somehow he kept going till the whistle blew. As he emptied the last bucket he turned and hurried down to find the manager.

## II.

"Can you use hammer and drill?" said the manager.

"I could soon learn."

"Learn! learn! Man! do you take this for a higher education shop, or what? This mine pays dividends, it don't teach. It's the other sort of mine that teaches hammer and drill to some that thought they'd never have to learn

it." He looked at the late topman for appreciation of his tirade on the other sort of mine, but without result, for the younger man was filled with his own forlornness, and was staring moodily over the manager's head at the now idle whim.

"You're hard up," he went on, "I don't want to turn you adrift. Look here! do you think you could guide a bucket out of the water, and keep a candle from going out?"

"Yes, I think I could do that," tentatively.

"Well, just be hanging about No. 2 whip-shaft at eight o'clock in the morning, and I'll take you down; I've a good miner wasting down there on the morning shift now; but we must get that deep shaft baled by horse as soon as possible, as there's a pump and engine on the road up for her; and, by-the-bye, you'll get full wages for this job though there's nothing to do; but it's rather wet and uncomfortable down there, and a bit lonely. Some of the fools won't take it on because there's nobody to talk to for eight hours at a time—you don't mind that, I suppose?"

"Oh no!"—with an attempt at cheerfulness. "I don't mind that." He really thought he would like to get away from everybody for a while, and as to going underground, why, it meant going to a place where he could not see the whim—which from everywhere above-ground seemed to drag his eyes to it.

It was what is called an underlay shaft; that is to say it was not vertical, but sloped at an angle of about 60°. It was about 160 feet deep, and the bucket ascended and descended on two wooden runners, or rails. Half way down there was a "level," or tunnel running both ways at right angles, in the floor of which there was a trap-door that shut in the bottom part of the shaft when the bucket was not

working. By the side of this trap-door was another tiny one through which the ladder was reached; this had to be closed after him by anyone going down or coming up.

There was about twenty feet of water in the shaft, the still surface looking, by the steady, sullen light of the candle which the manager deftly stuck in a lump of clay he took from his pocket, as if it were a surface of some smooth black unknown softness in which the falling drops knocked little holes that filled up mockingly.

"Here you are; you can sit on this piece of 3 x 2," he said, taking a small piece of wood from the scaffolding of the runners. "Put it across from a rung of the ladder to that niche in the wall." He pulled a piece of wire that ran all down the shaft, and presently a far off rumbling grew and grew; the bucket came noisily down, and, smashing into the water, rolled to one side.

"Catch it by the handle—that's right—steer it on to the runners—they'll only allow you a few seconds—now she's moving"; and ghostlike the bucket arose from the blackness and glided up and up till it was out of sight.

"Got another candle in case that one goes out or falls into the water?"

"Yes."

Then the manager climbed up and disappeared as the bucket came careering down again.

He was alone in the bowels of the earth. Looking around he saw that the walls were of a yellowish brown color. They did not look hard, yet there was no timber anywhere supporting them. He rapped the wall near him with his knuckles, and felt more satisfied—it was hard enough to the touch. Still, a roof always has more the appearance of a likelihood of falling down than a wall has of falling in, and what is called the hanging wall looked, to the lonely young worker,

like a roof of very doubtful security; it looked flaky, chunky, disconnected, not solid. He became aware, now that he was alone, that drips of water were quickly permeating his thin coat, and making little scarce-heard noises on his cap. Down came the bucket. As he leaned over the water to drag it into its place, he saw what would happen if he did not get it there in time. The edge of the bucket would catch in the stout cross-piece of the scaffolding, and the horse would tug, and jerk, and strain until—the rope would break, wherever it happened to be weakest—the bucket would sink like lightning to the bottom of the shaft, and the thick wire rope would come from the break, twisting and colling like an angry python. He would be utterly defenceless, and without escape; perhaps he would raise an impotent arm, and give one cry; perhaps he would be able to sit still and take his death or mangling as he believed some men did.

For an hour or more all went well. He gathered confidence from his repeated success in handling the bucket. He was soaked to the skin, but the water was not very cold. He began to sing, and found that his voice took unto itself a glory that it had never possessed before: he even seemed to himself to be singing in tune, a thing which he knew he had never accomplished previously. Presently there came a voice from the 100 feet level.

"Below there!"

"Hullo!" said the singer.

"We're going to fire. I've stopped your bucket with the communicator here—must shut you in for a bit. You seem pretty jolly down there?"

"Oh, I'm all right, thank you."

"Well, there'll be five shots, and then I'll come and open the door again—you're all right, eh?"

"Go ahead!" and clank fell the trap-door. Then came the cry "Fire! Fire!" in long drawn-out, warning shouts, and

two, three pairs of feet rattled, running over the iron door. What was coming? And how would it affect him, shut in his sloping tunnel? He turned to the candle for consolation: it was burning sulkily, and spluttering a little, for a tiny drop of water had fallen on the edge of it. He stretched out his hand to reach it, and look for a fresh place to put it in. As he did so there was a hiss, and a palpable black softness clung to his face and blinded him. It was the darkness. He heard the candle flop maliciously with a single chuckle into the water. A large drip had changed its starting-point, and had not only extinguished the candle but knocked it off its balance into the water.

For a moment, age-long, he did not dare to stir; it was as if he were buried alive in some soft black soil, and movement would let in the whole horror of it. Then his senses returned; he put out his hand, and touched the wall close to him. It was as though he had pressed the electric button for his own execution. The jeer of the diving candle, and the terrible darkness, had banished from his mind the closing of the trap-door, and the warning cry of fire.

As he touched the wall the shaft was filled with a smothered but tremendous roar; the vibration quivered through his body, and the darkness crinkled up and down his face. The invisible walls of his prison must be shaking; if only he could see how much! The almost two hundred feet of rock between him and the glorious sunlight that he had been so eager to get away from must surely fall, and crush him flatter than a sheet of newspaper. Would he feel it? Yes! There must be a moment of feeling as the life was ground out of him. He put his hands up to shelter his head. It was the same impotent movement that he had imagined himself making when he

had pictured the breaking of the wire rope. His half-delirious laugh at this recollection was choked to soundlessness by the concussion of the second blast. He cowered lower, and stopped his ears with his fingers, as his head quivered to the third and fourth blasts that came almost together.

Light! Light! He must have light, or something in his brain would burst, and he felt that to prevent this meant clinging to life. He groped frantically in his pockets and found the spare candle; he felt the ends, and put the butt into his mouth, for he wanted both hands—then the matches—as he opened the box a huge drip of water fell upon it. He struck wildly at several; there came no answering light. There was another chuckling plash in the water, and a tiny end of the candle fell back from between his teeth into his mouth. He hurled the useless matches from him, and furiously spat out the fragment of candle. Then came the fifth and loudest report. The blackness in which he was buried seemed to jam together round him in palpable spasms—a tiny flake of rock fell upon his foot. Good God! was it all coming? With a mighty effort he commanded his brain, which had begun a series of biographic views of childhood and youth, to tell upon which side of him was the ladder. He forced his right arm through the blackness, and clutched a rung. The piece of wood he had been sitting on fell into the water, and he dangled by one arm—an invisible fly clinging to an invisible wall, half submerged in invisible water. Then his feet found a rung, and he began with infinite care to feel his way up the ladder; up, and up, until his head bumped against the little trap-door, and he heard the dull tramp of returning feet. The large door opened.

"Below there?"

"I'm up here."

"What's the matter? Oh! I see; candle gone out, matches wet, eh?"

"Yes," said the young man.

"Bit nasty down there in the dark, isn't it? Been there myself." The miner had opened the little trap-door, and by the light of his candle gathered from the face below him that which suggested his words.

"The old man's nowhere about; you go on down, I'll follow you and fix up a regular bloomin' illumination, and give you a fresh start." He lit three pieces of candle; showed the young one how to keep an eye on the drips of water moving, gulded a few buckets for him, and talked about the exceeding solidity of the walls of the shaft; then he left him with a cheery word or so. The young man sang steadily till they called to him that it was time to come up. On one of the stages of the ladder he met a man coming down to take his place, who asked him how he liked it down there? Far above him he could see a speck of sunlight, and he answered, "Oh, not so bad!"

The next morning he came early to the mouth of the shaft. He could not go down till the whistle blew, so he walked along the whip-horse track, and looked at the wire rope lying idle along the ground. There were places where it had been mended, and there were two places where it looked to him as if it wanted mending. He wished he had not come to look at it, and as he climbed laboriously down with unnecessary clutching of the rungs, the weak places of the rope were all the time before his eyes; twice he almost dropped his candle. The bucket began to work, and the weak places on the rope stayed always in his mind, and gradually they explained themselves. He had for hours deliberately imperilled the lives of two men; knowing himself unfit for the task, he had continued to land the bucket at the whim shaft. The weak places in

the rope would get weaker and weaker till one of them would break, and his life also would be placed in deadly peril.

Only the chances of his escape were infinitely less than had been those of the men below him when he was on the surface, which was quite right; quite just; the punishment for his abject moral cowardice was to be death; he was sure that the judgment had been fixed. Somebody in some far-away court of justice passed sentence upon him. "To be killed as you might have killed"—that was how it ran, and that was all of it, no time was specified. It might be to-day, to-morrow, perhaps not for a week, but it would surely be.

Meanwhile, his imagination played weird jokes upon him. The runners and cross-pieces assumed the likeness of a scaffold, and the bucket became the inevitable knife of the guillotine, which, though it passed him by as yet, was only waiting for the order to lead him out through some unknown exit to the place where the dead myriads waited. At night, in his sleep, the bucket—with long arms, squat little legs and a black bulgy face that filled in the space between the handle and the mouth—would waddle to his bunk-side, and touch him on the shoulder with an iron forefinger, clanking out, "Come! follow me! follow me!" As he sprang upright in bed it would fall back into space with a frantic beckoning.

It never entered his head to try and escape, for he looked upon his doom as just, and waited for it with what calmness he could; and, indeed, there were times when the hidden terror in him gave place to an astonishing apathy; at other times a derisive mockery beset him, and again he was bolstered up with belief in his own bravery. His creed had been knocked to pieces at the top of the whim-shaft; he

was building it up again at the bottom of the whip-shaft.

As he came up the ladder at five o'clock in the evening he always met the other man going down to take his place till one o'clock in the morning. He seemed a cheerful sort of chap, and generally gave the usual miner's greeting—"Got another shift in, mate?" and the man coming up from his condemned cell for yet another look at the blue sky would answer simply, "Yes," and hurry up the remainder of his climb. There was no third shift from one o'clock on to daylight. The boy who drove the whip-horse at night slept in his hut, but always crawled into bed so quietly that he had never yet heard him come in.

On the fourth night he sat up in bed wildly and rubbed his eyes. The bucket had been pushing him, pushing him relentlessly down into the black water, and the black water was choking him. There was a light in the hut; the whip-boy, contrary to his custom, having lit a small candle-end stuck on the bottom of a jam tin. There was also a noise in the hut. It was the

Temple Bar.

whip-boy sobbing; sobbing with choking gasps, utterly beyond control. There was fright and horror too in the noise—he was putting up his arm to shut off something, and saying, "Oh, oh, oh! Don't, don't let me see!" Then he would break down again, and all the time he shivered, and tried to take off his clothes with hands that shook with a pitiful palsy.

"What is it, Jimmy?" asked the man, staring wildly from the bunk. At the sound of his voice the boy looked up, and staggering across the hut, still sobbing, threw his arms around the man and clung to him.

In gasps that seemed as if they must tear open his heaving little chest, the boy told what there was to tell.

"The rope broke—the bucket fell—and, oh!—smashed him—they brought him up—I saw him."

In between the boy's words the man could hear a murmuring of voices, and one or two sharp orders. The murmuring came nearer.

The other man's hut was near his.

He clung to the boy.

J. Stanley Hughes.

## MEMORIES OF MY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL DAYS.\*

BY EDMONDO DE AMICIS.

### XVI. THE FIFTY-NINE.

After my tenoresque passion was over I was distracted from my studies by something far more serious, something which, for the good fortune of Italy, lasted much longer than my previous enthusiasm had done. It was Victor Emmanuel who dealt the heaviest blow to my Latin. The exact date of this event was the first of January

of that scholastic year; and the king's weapon was the memorable address the *grido di dolore*. From that day onward our school was distracted by patriotism: a spirit which not even the most authoritative professors succeeded in subduing, which, on the contrary, they often increased, even during school-hours, by allusions to the events of the day, and by political digressions which would burst from their lips, like champagne from its bottle. The smell of powder seemed to be in all the air:

\*Translated for The Living Age.



the trumpets of the *bersaglieri*, who used to pass close by the Gymnasium, used to make our eyes sparkle, and caused grammatical mistakes to multiply behind our trembling pens. Even the oldest and most bent of the professors adopted a war-like bearing, and the fat National Guards, who took three steps to one paving-stone, no longer brought a smile to our lips when we met them on the street. The excitement increased toward the end of February, when our little city, now the principal dépôt for the *Cacciatori delle Alpi*, began to be thronged by young *émigrés* of all social conditions, coming for the most part from Lombardy and Venetia. These infused into the life of our city a more ardent spirit, and gave an unwonted air to its streets, its *cafés*, and all those places of public reunion, where each step showed one an unknown face, and one's glance was always met by another sparkling with pride and hope. Many of these countenances, some among which were destined to the honor of bronze and marble, remain as clearly imprinted on my memory as those of my most intimate friends. There were among that thousand and more of new-comers, veterans of the war of '48, and soldiers who had shared the defense of Rome; there were future artists of distinction, like Induno, Pagliano and de Albertis; there were Cairolli, Bertani, and De Cristoforis, whose *Trattato della Guerra* I was to read with enthusiasm at the School of Modena. But I do not recollect having heard their names at that time: their hour of glory had not yet sounded. The only name which was then upon the lips of all was that of Cosenz, whom I remember having often seen in the *Piazza d'Armi* before the volunteers had got their uniforms, directing their manœuvres with a little trumpet and a black overcoat, a veritable hero of the barricades. Slight

and straight as a ramrod, he had the grave countenance of a philosopher, and many respectfully touched their hats to him in the street in acknowledgment of the great prowess he had shown in Venice. And I remember well how, when the grey cloak hid all apparent difference of social condition between the *émigrés*, it sounded strange indeed to hear the loafers say, of this and the other private,—“That man is a lawyer: that a doctor. This one is a professor and that a great nobleman.” These things did more than all the addresses and “leaders” to give the uneducated an idea of the importance of the events which were then imminent, and caused our young ladies to cast sidelong glances of romantic curiosity at those coarse military cloaks;—glances with which up to that time they had certainly never favored the rank and file. Those were great days, which shine like sapphires in the crown of our most precious memories.

The excitement of us scholars reached its highest pitch in March when the reserves were called out and the veteran *bersaglieri* began to arrive, mature men, bronzed by the sun of many a campaign, with ragged tunics and rusty hats and home-made stockings; many having Crimean medals hanging from faded ribbons, so haggard often, that they might have been the fathers of those regulars, whose ranks they were come to swell. And here I recall an incident which made a great impression upon me, and which goes to prove that not even in Piedmont, not even in the most popular of wars, is any great military ardor to be found among those old soldiers who are hurried away from their children and their homesteads and sent to get themselves killed in foreign lands; even though a sense of duty leads them to bear themselves as bravely as the hottest enthusiasm could do. It was

one Sunday evening. A crowd of these veterans who had been recalled to active service, but who had not yet received their arms, were sauntering in pairs and squads along the principal thoroughfare which was packed with people. All of a sudden I saw a flag unfurled: the crowd parted and there advanced a considerable troop of citizens drawn up four abreast and singing Mameli's hymn. They all had on tall hats and dress-suits, and among them I recognized with pleasure some of my teachers; most prominent of all the professor of mathematics. As they passed along in front of me, one of a group of old *bersaglieri* standing near, delivered himself of the following apostrophe, in a clear and sarcastic tone: "It's mighty easy to sing! You do the singing, and we get killed! Stop your noise and come and fight with us!" The procession halted, broke into disorder and its members began to retort. A keen exchange of witticisms ensued, and some of the amateurs in their resentment accused the veterans of lack of patriotism, others who were more conciliatory tried to restore good feeling, and to prove that it was not the duty of every man to bear arms, that for many it was impossible, and one man said that he too had fought in '48 and '49. But the soldiers seemed but little impressed: they responded by mutterings and shrugs of the shoulder. What most surprised me in this incongruous and painful scene was the grand air with which some of the plump and perfumed participants in the procession would lay their hands on their hearts and vow that they were going to enlist, when you knew perfectly well by the placid expression of their faces, that they had not the remotest intention of so doing. They kept repeating with conviction, "We shall meet again at the front! We shall meet again at the front!" I can still see the looks of significant distrust

with which the veterans measured their rotundity, as if inquiring to what "front" they had reference and how they would look in *bersaglieri* uniform. The war of words lasted till two lieutenants came up, at sight of whom the *bersaglieri* dispersed. Poor fellows! Who knows if some of them were not the first to fall before the Austrian bullets at the assault of San Martino? The scene left me saddened and disturbed by many confused reflections, this among the rest:—that, to make a war truly national many a man ought to put musket on shoulder who never leaves his fireside, and that, in any case, those who stay at home would find it the part of delicacy and prudence not to sing too loud when they march by those who go to the war.

Another of my most vivid recollections is that of Garibaldi's coming, but in this memory there is an admixture of something bitter. He arrived one April day to review the *Cacciatori delle Alpi*, but he came almost by stealth, having entreated beforehand that his visit should not be announced, and he only remained in the city a few hours. We scholars only knew of his arrival when he had already held his review and laid aside his general's uniform. I was with one of my companions on one of the avenues of the *Piazza d'Armi* when some boys, catching sight of a carriage moving rapidly along, began to yell, "Garibaldi, Garibaldi!" and we tore after at full tilt. I do not know how much ground we had covered at the same break-neck speed, before our strength gave out and we fell on the side of a ditch, panting like two exhausted greyhounds. When we set out once more, the General was already dining at his inn and dinner also demanded our presence at home. He left the self-same night and we were mad enough to eat our hats. The next day we

traversed all the streets where he had passed, as if to keep on his scent. We were told that he had paid a visit to a little grocery-shop, kept by a woman called Pasqualina, and situated under the arcades, a sturdy, haughty woman whom all the city knew and respected, because one of her sons, Paolo Ramorino, had been the fellow-soldier and friend of Garibaldi in America and had met a heroic death at the defence of Rome, fighting by the side of Luciano Manara. We hurried straightway to Pasqualina, whom we found in front of her shop, surrounded by a crowd of curious persons to whom she was indicating a sack of rice upon which Garibaldi had sat the day before, while he talked with her. Ah, lucky Pasqualina! In what a halo of beauty and glory did she appear before us! We stood there for a little, staring at her and her sack, and, having a few pence in my pocket, the idea occurred to me that I might buy a quarter of a pound of the memorable rice which had had the honor of supporting the hero of Sant' Antonio. But from this my companion, who had some acquaintance with the character of the good woman, dissuaded me, remarking that she might take the proposition as a joke, and reply to it with a box on the ear of quite unfeminine vigor. And so our expedition came to naught. It had been even more unlucky than I had imagined, for I was to have no other opportunity for gratifying one of my ardent desires. It sounds incredible, but so it is. Through a series of accidents and aggravating delays, sometimes because I was an instant late, and again because of some most insignificant material impediment, the same misfortune was ten times repeated during my life. I have a deep regret in my heart, and I confess it with a certain mortification as though I were to blame; I never saw Garibaldi!

I am astonished that no trace remains of the profound impression which must have been made upon me by the arrival of the French at Turin and the first tidings of the battles of Montebello, Palestro and San Martino. Over these recollections, which must for a time have been most vivid, has spread, I know not when nor how, a thick cloud which I am quite unable to dissipate. I remember only the first news of the victory of Magenta, shouted by my father, up the staircase with an emphatic exclamation, accompanied by a wave of his hand above his head and the cry,—“We are at Milan.” But a moment's reflection shows that there is nothing strange about the eclipse which overtakes our memory of certain important events. We are mistaken in imagining that we, together with the rest of the world, must have felt when they were announced an emotion infinitely greater than that caused by their recollection, and that in those days we must have lived on a constant diet of great emotions. When we look down the line of a marching regiment from the head of the street we do not notice the intervals between the parted squads which appear to us to form one continuous whole; and so between those long-past events we no longer see the great spaces of time, during which we were absorbed in our ordinary pursuits and pleasures which always took the precedence of our civic thoughts and sentiments, and on the other hand, we do not consider that the long expectation and the very frequency of these great events, had as it were blunted our perceptions, and made our minds in a way indifferent even to the most unusual occurrences.

What I have not forgotten is the look of the Duomo during the frequent *Te Deums* that were sung there, and which were attended by all the civil and military authorities in their offi-

cial dress. Conspicuous among these used to stand out the fine brown head of the new Superintendent of Schools, who had received his appointment that very year. Domenico Carbone remains one of the brightest and most pleasant memories of my youth. How much good, even apart from direct instruction, can a scholar receive from a man of superior intelligence and noble character! The arrival of this superintendent, crowned with the double glory of poet and voluntary participant in the war of 1848 and preceded by the reputation of an upright and straightforward man, young in years, handsome in person, at once kindly and severe, and full of nobility in act and speech, had sent as it were a wave of clear, pure air through all the schools. In each class-room where he entered and spoke he left behind him an aroma of good intentions and noble ambitions as well as an impression of thorough good breeding which stirred our very souls. He worked wonders, reformed pupils who had hitherto been untamable and aroused the most lethargic to enthusiasm. All the poor, over-worked pupils, such as are to be found in every school, all the unhappy victims of the bulldozing of their companions or the antipathy of their teachers, even before they had personal experience of his kindness, felt his very presence to be a protection and many an act of injustice or knavery was prevented by the mere utterance of his name. All loved and revered him. We crowded to the landings to see him pass on the stairs. We made special expeditions and took round-about paths through the city just to meet and greet him and when in the Cathedral at the *Te Deum*, he appeared sitting at the head of the row of teachers and turned upon the pack of scholars his two great eyes, so grave and loyal, and said by his kindly smile,—"There are my boys!"—our

hearts responded with a leap of love and pride. If instead of multiplying rules and regulations we could only multiply such men as these!

I will tell a little story in which he plays a part, not so much to do him honor as to raise a laugh at my own expense; for this gives me the sort of pleasure now-a-days, which the *flagellanti* of old used to derive from being flayed. We had had for years as vice-superintendent a priest not so much inflamed by religious zeal as inflammable by nature, who wore his cassock as though it had been a strait-waistcoat. He was not a bad fellow at bottom but very quick-tempered and possessed by a mania for playing the ogre, a rôle which he enacted chiefly by means of mysterious threats and by rolling his eyes like the Louis XI of the stage. There was circulating through the school a satiric poem of which this man was the object. It had been written by a student in Philosophy whom I happened to know because of the intimacy between our respective families. Wild to read the satire, the reverend father conceived the notion of frightening me into handing it over. And, summoning me to his office at a time when we were sure of finding ourselves alone he adjured me in solemn words to bring him the *corpus delicti*, under penalty of being "flunked" at my final examinations, and he further prescribed the precise day and hour when the poem was to be consigned to him in that very room. When we parted I was trembling from head to foot, equally distressed by his threat of vengeance and by the thought of the ignoble action which I found myself enjoined to commit, and I passed the entire day in a state of harrowing uncertainty. But next morning a saving thought flashed into my mind, Domenico Carbone! I was quite sure that he would

disapprove the action of the priest and not condemn my own disobedience and still there was no need of my making the matter a serious one by means of a formal appeal to his authority. Knowing that at the hour fixed for my response Carbone was always in his office, with my bug-bear and his own private secretary, I rather thought that if I were to set forth my refusal with an oratorical flourish and in a strident voice, he would be sure to hear and demand an explanation, whereupon I should escape—my enemy be hoist with his own petard. Eureka! Really for a boy of thirteen it wasn't altogether a bad idea. And not only did I feel myself safe from that moment but with the confusion of ideas common to mankind in such cases I began to conceive of myself as a Spartan soul and I composed in my mind an answer which should display my heroism;—a theatrically effective repartee which should set forth in shining colors all my true nobility of character.

At the appointed hour I entered the office, setting my heels down hard, as if to make my spurs resound. At a great table were seated on the one side Carbone and his secretary talking to one another, on the other the ogre who, at the moment, almost moved me to compassion. He signed to me to approach and then asked in a whisper if I "had brought it."

I struck an attitude, threw back my head and with a side-long glance at the superintendent replied in a loud voice, "I have *not* brought it. I have made up my mind that to do so would be to commit an action—"

"All right! All right!" said the priest, motioning to me to be silent.

But I raised my voice and continued, "To do so would be to commit an action unworthy of myself—"

"All right, I tell you. That's enough."

But I had now got my wind, the superintendent had turned round, and I determined to deal my blow at all hazards, so once more I struck in,—"*An action unworthy of myself. The betrayal of a friend—*"

"Will you go?" screamed the priest, his face purple with anger. "When I tell you there is nothing more to be said, why don't you leave?"

So I went, but slowly, and with a dragging step, as Pier Capponi must have withdrawn from the presence of Charles the Eighth. I turned on the threshold and gave a last look at my vanquished foe, who returned it with a burning, not to say blasting glance.

I never knew whether the superintendent sought and obtained an explanation of the affair, but there was no doubt that the priest had understood my tactics. The fact is that I never heard anything more of the affair and that I got my promotion when examination time came, though as usual I only just pulled through. And that is how, among his other good deeds, the author of *Re Tentenna* unconsciously prevented my being a cad.

*Cavalier che hai bianca fede  
Come bianca è la tua croce,  
Tu d'eroi gagliardo erede,  
Tu all' oppresso amica voce,  
Tu sgomento all' oppressor—"*<sup>1</sup>

I remember these lines of a fine poem addressed by Carbone to Victor Emmanuel, which he published this year and which all we scholars learned by heart. The war had opened the flood-gates, even in our little sub-alpine city, to a rush of lyric patriotism. Professors, employés in the prefecture, lawyers and officers of the *bersaglieri*, all alike began to manufac-

<sup>1</sup> Knight, who hast a faith as white,  
As is thy white cross (on the shield of  
Savoy)

Thou the gallant heir of heroes,  
Thou, voice of a friend to the tyrannized,  
Thou, terror to the tyrant—



ture warlike rhymes. Twenty citizens could not gather about a dish of *risotto alla Milanese* without someone's thundering forth an avalanche of strophes which would presently circulate in manuscript or print, inflaming many with hatred against Austria, some with hatred of the Muses. But, with the exception of Carbone, only one of this swarm of poets has remained clear to my recollection. Permit me to present him, so that his memory which is one of the comforts of my own life may add some sweetness also to yours. He was the professor of Philosophy, one of the most delightful oddities who can ever have enlivened the schools of this kingdom; a long-haired man of fifty, his head half hidden by a great nap-less hat of the stove-pipe pattern, which looked as though it were nailed to his skull. He wore all the year round a threadbare black coat which descended to his knees and he was a man sure to have become famous in our city were it only for one habitual gesture. He had the most comical way of doubling up one arm with its fist clenched, then pounding the elbow furiously with his other hand, as though he felt it his duty to give himself a beating. Strange indeed were the lessons we learned of him! Quite seriously he used to demand of his most experienced pupils friendly counsels concerning the bearing he should assume toward a widow to whom he was then paying court, but whom he could not make up his mind to marry because her views about the proper hours for meals did not coincide with his own:—the "noisiest of the Philosophers," his colleagues used to call him because he bellogged forth his lectures on Philos-

ophy with a lung-power which drowned the voices of all the professors in the neighboring class-rooms. But all these peculiarities are as nothing in comparison with the unimaginable originality of his verses, which all his pupils used to recite, laughing the while as if to dislocate their jaws. What a pity that I have no longer a copy of them! But, Heaven be praised! I have not forgotten them all. I remember one stanza of a hymn addressed to General Petitti,<sup>1</sup> to the effect that, though his name was *petty* his Soul was great, and promising him a glorious triumph at the polls:—also a few lines from another poem in honor of the city of Bene, which extends, if he is to be believed, over seven hills, a fact which afforded the poet a pretext for addressing to it the somewhat strained compliment, that only a misapprehension had led to the choice of Rome in her stead as capital of Italy.<sup>2</sup>

How anyone could teach Philosophy who treated Poetry after this fashion, even though the two are not twin sisters, remains an insoluble problem. But they used to say that he was a good fellow after all. O mysteries of the human mind! O wretched poet of Bene and its seven hills! I last heard of him many years later in Turin. The story ran that something induced him to have recourse to certain rascals who announced themselves as "medi-ums" and that these in order to make him hand over his money, had caused him to be thrashed by the spirit whom he had evoked, and this with no magic wand, but with a stout, knotted, ashen stick, which had sent him to bed for a week.

Such are the *petty*—I might say the Petitti—woes of a philosopher.

*Nuova Antologia.*

(*To be continued.*)

<sup>1</sup> "Natura ti die nome  
Petitti, ma sei grande  
E il nome tuo si spande  
Per l'avia elattoral."

<sup>2</sup> These quite untranslatable lines were as follows:—

Che d'Italia fia regina

Tal cittade che sia posta  
Sopra sei e una collina,  
E Cavour la credi Roma,  
Ignorando i sette in Bene  
Colli aprichi, e la gran soma  
Di virtù che ascose tiene.

## BURNS AS AN ENGLISH POET.

It is easy to foresee one of two things for the enterprise on which I am starting at this moment. I must either establish a fact in literary criticism or I must resign myself to be regarded as an extremely ridiculous person. I accept the risk.

An English critic of influence and distinction some two or three years ago wrote an essay which received a sort of coronation and was rewarded with a prize of fifty pounds. The writer lamented that Burns had occasionally descended into English, and he labored to prove that under those conditions the poet either lost or in some measure degraded his faculty. My purpose in these pages will be to show that Burns was as indisputably a poet in one vehicle as in the other: and I shall even hope to demonstrate that he is at his best and highest in those frequent passages in which he diverges from that Ayrshire Scottish, which was his birth-right, to the English tongue. It is not commonly recognized that (apart from his humorous and satirical poems) something like half of Burns's work is done in English pure and simple, nor is it apparently observed that even in some of those poems which are cited as being in the vernacular, the greater bulk of the verse is not even salted with a hint of dialect. One could readily imagine the laughter which might greet the statement that "Scots Wha Hae" is an English poem. Yet the fact remains that there are only five words in a work of twenty-four lines which are not indisputably English. They are "wha," "hae," "wham," "aften" and "fa'," and it is not necessary to point out that these also are English with a localized spelling. In the "Lines to a Mountain Daisy" there are eight Ayrshire words, and the poem contains

nine verses of six lines each. In the "Vision" there are thirty-five consecutive verses of six lines each in which there is not a solitary word of dialect or even of localized spelling. In "Mary in Heaven" we have four eight-line verses of pure English: and no intrusion of a hint of Scots. In "Man was Made to Mourn" there is no dialect. It contains eighty-eight lines. In the "Cottar's Saturday Night" there are one hundred and eighty lines, of which one hundred and thirty contain no Scottish word. It will be admitted by most whose opinion is of value that these are rather curiously chosen examples of the art of sinking. By the general consent of critical mankind "Scots Wha Hae" is the fieriest and intensest call to freedom to which the world has listened. You have but to write "o" for "a," to insert a "v" and a double "l," and, behold! a poem without a trace of local color. And it would appear to be pretended that this volcanic splendor of patriotic rage owes its virtue to a few odd forms of spelling. It is fairly clear that it owes its qualities to the fact that its author was a poet of very unusual faculty, and was, when he chose to be so, a poet in the English tongue. In the case of the cited verses of the "Vision," which are amongst the noblest lines patriot ever wrote, there is no such question offered to us, because they are English without spot or stain. The same fact is true of "Mary in Heaven," of which it may be justly said that it reaches the high-water mark of human emotion. The same fact is true of very much more than half the "Cottar's Saturday Night," which has moved its millions to tears and smiles the world over.

Merely to establish the fact that Rob-

ert Burns could write lovely or inspiring English is a task which presents no difficulty. But the theory I have at heart to prove is not one which will be at once or willingly accepted. It seems to me as if Mr. Henley had stood upon his head to think when he expressed the idea that Burns *descended* into English. To me it appears that he never in any case, in his really serious work, does anything but soar into it, and that his very value as a poet of dialect is incalculably increased by the fact that he was so great an English master. I shall try to prove that an essential part of his craftsmanship lies in his familiarity with English and his readiness to make use of it, and I shall hope to show a feature of his genius which has hitherto, so far as I know, been disregarded by all his critics. (I may say that I do not propose to deal with the Songs, some forty of which are possibly written in English for no better reason than that they were meant by a musical composer for an English, or partly English, market. I do not think them on the whole nearly so good as the Scots verses of their kind, though in both a perfunctory sort of inspiration seems frequently to have been at work. But to know where we are it is needful to say that we are dealing with a poet who for one reason or another chose to confine himself in some seventy poems to the English language, and who invariably employed that language more or less in his wholly serious dealings with pen and ink.

My argument will apply to Burns in his inspired and splendid hours alone, but it is obvious that it cannot deal with all of them. If the gentleman in the "Critic" cannot see the Spanish Fleet he has a reason for it. It is not yet in sight. In trying to show how much Burns was a master of English and to what effect he used his mastery I must not deal with "Halloween" nor

with "Holy Willie's Prayer," nor "Death and Dr. Hornbook," nor "The Holy Fair," nor the lines on Grose the Antiquary, nor the immortal address to the De'il, because not a line of English is to be found in any one of them. That each and every one of these is a masterpiece in its way I am not merely willing to admit but eager to proclaim, and there is one thing I feel impelled to say of them in passing, even if it should point to the extrusion of the English critic altogether. These outbreaks of wrath, of satire, of pathos, of humor and affectionate familiarity with old uses not yet bygone, are not rightly to be enjoyed by any foreigner whomsoever. The true lover of the truly vernacular verse of Burns is that he or she who was bred within their influence in childhood and in whose mind they awaken emotions which they cannot arouse in the minds of others. There are many passages which I cannot read or recall without a clear vision of my father's face, and a clear hearing of his Scottish voice. These things are of course extrinsic to the value of the verse, but they—and a hundred of their similars—lend a sacred pleasure—dare I say?—to the reading of Burns, which is only known to those who have been born within his borders. It is very certain that if Burns had rigorously confined himself to the vernacular he would have had a comparatively poor audience in point of numbers, and even as things stand there are more downright pretenders amongst his professed worshippers than ever followed another poet. All the world over one meets cockney admirers of "Duncan Gray" for example, for whom "spak o' lowpin' o'er a linn" might be Chinese or Choctaw for anything they know to the contrary. It would be absurd to say that an intense pleasure may not be experienced in the reading of great work in any foreign tongue which one has had the industry to

study, but Ayrshire Scotch is not merely a foreign tongue to the average Englishman. It is a language of such intimacies as are not to be described in a glossary, and it cannot be appreciated to the full by one who has merely learned it as he might learn French or German. This is true, of course, of all little languages, and is known to lend a peculiar value to many small local literatures. That the poems of Robert Burns enjoy a more than local reputation is due not merely to the abounding genius which inspires the greater bulk of them. It is at least partially due to that other fact that so large a portion of his work (and of the very best and most poetical of it) is written in pure English, and that all but the humorous and satirical work is moderately understandable to the least industrious of English readers.

I shall be careful to bear in mind the truth that when Burns first began to write he had no idea of the dignity to which he was destined to elevate his native speech. In his day Ayrshire Scotch was the natural linguistic weapon for a herder of cattle or a tiller of the soil. No unsetting sun of genius had yet gilded its humble beauties into splendor, and in his wildest fancies the poet could not have dreamed of the work it would be his to do. He would see even more clearly than men of the present day, how much more copious, varied, sonorous, dignified and polished is the language written by Shakespeare, Milton and Addison than the obscure dialect in which he first learned the art of speech. This knowledge would naturally tempt him to deviate into English when he found himself inspired by a thought of unusual elevation. A little language, such as the Ayrshire Scotch was at the time when Burns was born to make it glorious, is excellent for humor, and super-excellent for the tenderer intimacies of the heart, but it is naturally

without terms in which to express certain lofty and subtle forms of thought. My contention in the first place is that Burns realized this keenly, in the second that he was artistically right, and in the third that it was this instinct which enabled him to lay soundly the foundations of a world-wide fame instead of building a merely local reputation.

The peasant of the Parmesan district eats his native cheese, when he can get it, in the lump. The epicure uses it as a condiment only. "Halloween" and "Holy Willie" are Parmesan in the lump. In the "Saturday Night" the dialect is used just freely enough to give piquancy, and in "Scots Wha Hae" and "The Daisy" there is, as we have seen already, but the merest careful sprinkling, enough to bestow a flavor and no more. Dropping the simile, let us notice the overwhelming advantage which Burns enjoys over other great British poets. He is the owner of an additional language, which he can use in its purity if he so pleases, and which he alone amongst other writers of acknowledged greatness is permitted to intermix in any degree which may seem befitting to him with a more dignified and copious vocabulary. To illustrate the astonishing and perfect art with which he does this I must needs have recourse to quotation. But before I proceed to the actual citation of words, I will offer a broad illustration of the principle of the criticism I apply to Burns. Often as he has proved his mastery of pathos, his two greatest achievements in that way are—I presume I may say by common consent—the lines to Mary and "Ye Banks and Braes." Each lays before us the sorrow of departed joys, and the emotions produced by the reading of the one are very closely akin to the emotions produced by the reading of the other. What instinct led the poet to write the one wholly in Eng-

lish and the other in a delicately blended form of the English and Ayrshire tongues? The answer appears to be simple. In the lines to Mary no touch of local color is needed to add to the poignant effect produced. We are here in the presence of a bereaved human creature whose soul is one anguished cry after the departed. It does not matter in the least whether the heart be that of a Scot or a Breton or a Mongol. Humanity is greater than nationality. Manhood—simple manhood—writhing in that agony we have all known or are doomed to know, sends forth this lamentable and exceeding bitter cry. That it is an Ayrshire peasant who thus suffers makes no difference in the world. But in "Bonnie Doon" rusticity is an essential of the whole matter. A country girl is lamenting the perfidy of her lover, and if we had not the touching dialect in which she pours forth her grief we should not have present to our minds the simplicity which contributed to her downfall, and which at once elicits our pitying pardon. Let us try the last four lines in English:—

With lightsome heart I pulled a rose  
Full sweet upon its thorny tree,  
And my false lover stole my rose  
But ah! he left the thorn to me.

Nothing can spoil the beauty of the conceit, and yet a something has evaporated—a suggestion of artlessness and innocence. Beautiful it is and beautiful it remains, and if Burns had chosen so to write it, it would have gone home; but he did better with it. It is pure English with an Ayrshire accent—nothing more. But the accent is an essential here. And so we get it. For Burns never writes English where Scotch will serve his turn better, and never writes a word of Scotch where English is needed for his purpose. I suppose that if there is one of his poems more intensely identified than

another with what I may call the general Scottish legend it is that tremendous blend of farce and horror, of devilment and beauty, called "Tam o' Shanter." There are many moods expressed in this amazing poem, and they are all differentiated by the linguistic method employed in dealing with them. Where the mirth—or the grotesquerie—is at its wildest the speech is at its broadest. At the level of narrative its rudenesses are partially subdued. Where gravity, or, for the matter of that, mock gravity, comes in, pure English comes in with it. The study of the following eight lines will repay the discerning lover of artistic method. It will be noticed that the first two lines are as vulgar—I use the word in its legitimate sense—in matter as in expression. Then follows the dawning of a reflection in which the verbal fashion is considerably modified, and the last two lines of the passage—in as clean a bit of strenuous English as you may meet in a day's reading—introduce to the imagination a domestic figure at the sight of which many brave men have shaken in their shoes. I invite the attention of the critic to the extreme delicacy with which this transition is accomplished.

While we sit bousing at the nappy  
And getting fou and unco happy,  
We think na' o' the lang Scots mles,  
The waters, mosses, slaps and styles,  
Which lie between us and our hame,  
Whaur sits our sullen sulky dame;  
Gathering her brows like gathering  
storm,  
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

In returning to the wholly humorous consideration of

The mony serious sage advises  
The husband frae the wife despises,

the poet permits himself the broadest employment of dialect: as for example:—



She tauld thee weel thou was a skel-  
lum.

A blethering, blustering, drunken blei-  
lum;

That frae November till October  
Ae market day thou wasna sober;  
That ilka melder, wi' the miller,  
Thou sat as long as thou had siller;  
That every naig was ca'd a shoe on  
The smith and thee got roaring fou on:

And so on, in almost but not quite the broadest of dialect, until the poet's thought rises beyond the noise of Soutar Johnnie's mirth, and the atmosphere of the reaming swats that drank divinely: and with the rising of the thought, he chooses once again the nobler medium of expression, and in eight lines of universally acknowledged beauty he challenges a place beside the best of those who have written in English verse alone.

But pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed!  
Or like the snow-flake in the river,  
One moment white—then melts for  
ever;

Or like the borealis race  
That flit ere you can point their place;  
Or like the rainbow's lovely form  
Evanishing amid the storm.

Thenceforward for a time the poet holds a middle course. The dialect is full, but not quite of the richest, and there are lines in which it is absent altogether, because the storm and the horror are coming on and we must needs have a touch of dignity in keeping with the theme. And now the tempest is here in earnest, and no mere dialect is big enough to speak of it.

Before him Doon pours all her floods;  
The doubling storm roars through the  
woods;

The lightnings flash from pole to pole;  
Near and more near the thunders roll;  
When glimmering through the groan-  
ing trees

Kirk-Alloway seemed in a bleeze.

It is a fact which the most cursory study will establish that whenever Burns is splendid he is English. There is of course a sense in which he is splendid almost everywhere, but I do not mean to use the word that way. When he is tender he is English with a Scottish accent, as I have shown already in one example and could show in fifty if I had the space to move in. Whenever he is dignified in theme he is English pure and simple. There are five verses in "A Bard's Epitaph," and here are three of them:—

Is there a man whose judgment clear  
Can others teach the course to steer  
Yet runs himself life's mad career

Wild as the wave?

Here pause—and thro' the starting  
tear

Survey this grave.

The poor Inhabitant below  
Was quick to learn and wise to know,  
And keenly felt the friendly glow  
And softer flame.

But thoughtless follies laid him low  
And stain'd his name!

Reader, attend! Whether thy soul  
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,  
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,  
In low pursuit,

Know, prudent, cautious self-control  
Is Wisdom's root.

The verse is didactic, and there are some strange people who would limit the definition of poetry to the exclusion of its special mood, but the verse beginning "The poor Inhabitant below" has a place in too many hearts and memories to be readily relinquished.

But let us look for a further confirmation of my theory at one of those poems which the careless or casual reader of Burns would class among his vernacular works. Let us take the address to a Field Mouse. I am not concerned to defend the first three lines of the second verse, which are flatly prosaic in expression, but I call atten-

tion to the fact that one of the most humane and elevated thoughts ever expressed by a poet in any language is expressed by Burns in English:—

... That ill opinion  
Which makes thee startle  
At me, *thy poor earth-born companion,*  
*And fellow-mortal!*

The thought is in itself so tenderly generous that it needs no device of dialect. Mrs. Browning writes of "jewels five words long." "Thy poor earth-born companion" fits the phrase literally. The poet, with that seemingly artless art which is at the very soul of his method, turns to the affectionate intimacies of his native speech at the instant at which they can be most effectively employed—

That wee-bit heap o' leaves an' stibble  
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!  
Now thou's turn'd out for a' thy  
trouble

But house or hald  
To thole the winter's sleety dribble  
And crancreuch cauld!

The dialect is exquisitely suited to the theme, but mark what happens when the poet sees his own possible fate imaged in the disaster which has overtaken the little field-creature. The thought grows to a tragic grandeur, and the language must suit it.

Still are thou blest compar'd with me  
The present only toucheth thee,  
But oh! I backward cast my e'e  
On prospects drear!  
And forward, though I canna see,  
I guess and fear!

Here three letters only will obliterate every trace of accent. I am not quite barbaric enough to suggest the obliteration, but it is at least worth notice that so very broad an approach to pure English is made at the moment at which the thought rises into dignity.

The "Lines to a Mountain Daisy" still more strikingly illustrate this characteristic of Burns's method. The

poet is here playing, with an extraordinary apprehension of use and fitness, upon that double instrument he uses. Note this:—

Alas! it's no' thy neebor sweet  
The bonnie lark—companion meet  
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet  
Wi's speckled breast,  
When upward-springing, blythe, to  
greet  
The purpling east.

There is no great insistence on the Ayrshire form of speech in any one line of this, but in the third line and the fourth there is just a touch of the tender domesticity of the little language, and then, for the vision of the soaring bird and the wide fresh glories of the morning, the simplest, most melodious and best-chosen English. There is only one word of Scotch in the third verse (and there is not one in the last four) but that word is used with much art to maintain the rustic atmosphere until such time as the poet is prepared to soar away from it altogether, as he does in the verses beginning "Such is the lot of artless maid."

Cauld blew the bitter-biting North  
Upon thy early, humble birth,  
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth  
Amid the storm,  
Scarce rear'd above thy parent earth  
Thy tender form!

I should be sorry to fatigue the reader, but I cannot resist the temptation to point to the absence of dialect in many of the poet's best-known single lines, such as "the rank is but the guinea stamp," or that noble phrase of mourning, "and left us darkling in a world of tears." The question I have been discussing is not one of comparison between Burns's purely Scottish and purely English work. Should such a comparison be attempted it is very evident that not one of the English poems save "Mary in Heaven" would survive it. My purpose has been only

to show that he did not *sink* into English, but that he rose into it with complete spontaneity and unfailing judgment in all his more delicate, dignified and charming work, and that it is to his mastery of a most delicate, dignified and charming English that he mainly owes the unique place he occupies among poets.

And here, in strict reasonableness, I should bring this article to an end, but I wish to take advantage of my present opportunities to offer a word or two with regard to a characteristic of Burns's genius which has never seemed to me to have received its proper award from any of his critics. There are few people who are so deeply cleft as the Scotch. They are miserly in the extreme, and they are in the extreme open-handed and generous. They are douce and sober in the extreme and wildly hilarious in the extreme. They include the most tolerant and the most intolerant of men and women. Bigots of piety and economy of the most repelling type, harum-scarum jollificationers of the most inviting, the unco' guid and the unco' careless, flourish amongst them side by side. Burns is the man who most piercingly and inclusively knows them all, and though there are not many who would dispute his knowledge, there are still fewer who have noticed how complete it is. "Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut" is not commonly regarded as an analysis of national character, yet I make bold to regard it as one of the keenest and subtlest pieces of work ever done in that direction. The drunken chorus which goes with that most rollicking of all songs of the over-convivial school is a playful but no less trenchant in-

dictment of the Caledonian Conscience.

We are na fou, we're nae that fou,  
Just a wee drapple in our e'e.

We are not drunk. Flatteſt of falsehoods. We are moſt particularly drunk—Willie the brewer, and Rab and Allan the taſters; and the Caledonian Cameronian conſcience is going to have a word with us. Very good. We will admit the impeachment, but with caution, as befits our nationality. "We're nae *that* fou." But even this qualified denial of a too-patent fact will not ſerve a conſcience of the Caledonian Cameronian kind, and we are forced to that further admission of juſt the wee drapple in our e'e. An Engliſhman would never have thought of it, nor an Iriſhman, nor a Frenchman, nor any man of any other nationality on earth. Do I ſuppoſe, I imagine myſelf being aſked, that Burns deliberately thought this out? Not for a moment. But it was with him as it has been with all natural ſingers: his genius carried him further than he actually knew or paused to fancy. That he knew what he had done when he had done it, and that this was his own reading of the lines I have no fainteſt doubt whatever.

Admire alſo the pragmatic perſon who is ſo drunkenly perſuaded of his own perceptive powers in the line "It is the moon." D'y'e doot me? "It is the moon." And I have a reaſon for the faith that is in me. "I ken her horn." Never did malt help a man to a clearer ſtroke of ratiocination. And did ever anybody but a Scot dream of a dogmatic aſſertion and a clinching juſtification of it in the middle of a drinking ſong?<sup>1</sup>

David Chriſtie Murray.

The Contemporary Review.

<sup>1</sup> The obſervant inebriate is concerned with the moon in the fourth ſtanza of "Dr. Hornbook."

The riſing moon began to glow'r,  
The diſtant Cumnock Hills out-owre:

To count her horns wi' a' my pow'r  
I ſet myſel'.  
But whether ſhe had three or four  
I couldna tell.

## LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

The gentle art of spreading scandal, though by no means lost among us, was practised more gracefully under the early Georges than it is perhaps at the present date. The town became acquainted with my lord's indiscretion or the latest catastrophe at her grace's house through the medium, not of bald prose only, but of most polished verse. Among a host of industrious ballad-mongers, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, most charming and dangerous of ex-ambassadors, turned the neatest lines reflecting upon the follies of her friends; and the couplets in which Mr. Pope related this or that damaging story have been the wonder of each succeeding generation of readers to our own day.

In an ironical mood Fate decreed that these two brilliant wits, who had wounded many a contemporary by tongue or pen, should at length turn upon each other the weapons they had employed elsewhere with such deadly effect. Each avenged upon an adversary the sufferings of many victims. How the "dunces" of Grub Street rejoiced when the lady of quality sneered at the humble birth of the merchant's son! And the *grandes dames* of Lady Mary's acquaintance, though of course they condemned as scandalous Mr. Pope's insinuations, did they not feel a little malicious joy at the confusion the poet had brought upon their sharp-tongued friend? Mere men and women, alas! do not display on an occasion of this kind the magnanimity of the angelic world. Moreover, he seldom commands the sympathy of bystanders who is hoist with his own petard.

The cause of this unseemly quarrel remains still a mystery. A difference of opinion in politics—a little raillery

on the lady's part at a high-falutin' poem—a pair of sheets lent and returned unwashed—all these have been variously put forth as *fons et origo mali*. On better authority is the story that Lady Mary laughed immoderately at an inopportune declaration, and that the poet was thereafter her implacable foe. But whatever it was that aroused Pope's enmity, his was a connoisseur's revenge. In this case there was no need to draw an elaborately finished portrait of the Atticus or Sporus type. A single touch, a mere line or two, will suffice to traduce a woman's honor. He wrote the thing; repeated it in succeeding works; when questioned denied its application, but was careful that the denial should obtain no credit; and thus left a stain, not on her memory only, but on his own by his shameless prevarications.

The affair continued for some years to interest London, much, we take it, to the chagrin of that irreproachable ex-ambassador, Mr. Wortley Montagu. Suddenly, however, the lady most concerned in the quarrel withdrew from Society and began a life of restless travel on the Continent. A few years later and her foe went his way to the quiet grave in Twickenham Church.

With Pope dead and Lady Mary in exile, town talk passed to fresher themes. And it is surely not merely as the victim of this little waspish poet's malice that we should remember one of the most original women of the eighteenth century. Her "Letters" have no longer their old vogue, but they will always be read with sympathetic interest by the student of character—and more especially by the student of feminine character. *Plus ça change, plus c'est toujours la même chose*; the life-like present-

ment of a personality can never become out of date. Lady Mary's "Letters" belong to a bygone world, but she herself will never cease to be a real woman to us; in fact, a modern of the moderns.

Critics, while they do abundant justice to the "masculinity" of Lady Mary's good sense, fail sometimes to appreciate the femininity of her temperament. She was that not altogether unheard-of character, an inconsistent woman; and when Nature wishes to form a finished specimen of that type, it must be admitted that she does her work well. Lady Mary was also eccentric to a marked degree, and the fact should not be overlooked that in the case of her sister, Lady Mar, this family trait took the form of downright madness. Spence, who met Mr. Wortley Montagu's wife in Rome during her exile, gives us the impression that this gifted, restless being made on an observant contemporary: "She is," he says, "one of the most shining characters in the world, but shines like a comet; she is all irregularity, and always wandering; the most wise, the most imprudent; loveliest, most disagreeable; best natured, cruellest woman in the world; all things by turns, and nothing long."

In this case the old cry of *variable semper* is not without justification. She was changeable with the changeableness of all those who have no central pivot upon which to turn their life's affections and life's work. Like many members of the adaptable sex, Lady Mary took her cue from her surroundings with marvellous quickness. In Turkey she was all for Greek antiquities and the customs of the Turks. In London her head ran on nothing but scandal and amours. In her Italian exile she vaunted seclusion and retirement, and adopted the mild hobbies common among many who lead a solitary life. We recognize at least half

a dozen Lady Marys under one skin. There was the fighting Lady Mary, who protected her stricken sister from a treacherous and perhaps cruel husband and his infamous brother. There was the zealous reformer, who introduced the practice of inoculation in spite of the obstructions of an unintelligent medical profession. There was the Lady Mary who studied Latin in solitude, who at fifteen desired to enter a convent, who at twenty translated the austere Epictetus, who was valued by Mary Astell and Mr. Wortley; and there was the frivolous Society woman of the "Town Eclogues" and the letters to Lady Mar; the Lady Mary, of whom "gallant" stories were related, who in her letter to her sister declared frankly that "there are but three pretty men in England, and they are all in love with me at this present writing."

In short, there was in this great lady something of the intellectual recluse, something of the philanthropist and something—not to put too fine an edge upon the matter—of the common flirt. Miss Hannah More, according to that admirable and moral work entitled "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife," held that consistency was the true touchstone of excellence in the female character. But then Miss More appears to have understood the artistic temperament as little as Mr. Wortley Montagu.

Born in the year following the "glorious Revolution" of 1688, Mary, eldest daughter of Evelyn Pierrepont, received but little systematic educational training. Lord Kingston was proud enough of her lovely face, proud enough to propose her name as a toast to the Kit-Cat Club before she was eight years old, but for all we know he never valued his daughter's unusual mental powers a jot, even if he suspected their existence. He held, of course, with the average parent of



those days, that the whole duty of a woman was to marry without question the husband of her father's choice, and he was long in forgiving his daughter because on this particular her views differed from his. Save on those occasions when it sulted him to play the family tyrant he was far too fine a gentleman to concern himself particularly with the welfare of his motherless girls. He probably imagined, in common with the rest of the world—if, indeed, he deigned to consider the subject at all—that his daughter was poring over romances in the library, when in truth for five or six hours daily the diligent young scholar was grappling with dictionary and grammar in her anxiety to master the Latin tongue. For in the long days of girlhood, when sorrow and joy chase one another across our mood as quickly as rain follows sunshine in spring weather, Mary Pierrepont had for companions her books and her dreams. Among the former, in addition to the Latin classics, were French romances, ponderous tomes of Scudéri and Calprenède, "Englished by persons of honor." And among the latter, which naturally all centred round her own small person, was that of founding and entering a convent. "It was," she wrote to her daughter in old age, "a favorite scheme of mine, when I was fifteen; and had I then been mistress of an independent fortune, I would certainly have executed it, and elected myself lady-abbess. There would you and your ten children have been lost forever."

There can be little doubt that this girlish plan was inspired by the writings of Mary Astell, that first and well-nigh forgotten champion of what are popularly known as "Woman's Rights," whose "Serious Proposal to Ladies by a Lover of her Sex" created such a stir in 1694. This proposal advocated the advantage of retirement

to a nunnery, conducted on strict Church of England principles; where daily service was to be performed "after the Cathedral manner, in the most affecting and elevating way," but where the mental training—and on this point the would-be foundress was exceedingly strong—was to be as important as the moral and religious. The scheme attracted the notice of a certain great lady, probably the Princess Anne, who promised £10,000 towards the fund necessary for its realization. But Bishop Burnet, gaining the ear of the great lady, whispered "Popery," at which black word her benevolent intentions, like the walls of Jericho at the sound of the trumpet, fell to the ground, and the project was perforce abandoned.

The writings of Mary Astell are full of criticism on the ordinary education—if the thing may be dignified by so high-sounding a name—and the frivolous employments of her sex. Personal observation, no doubt, suggested similar ideas to her younger contemporary. It was the age of the apotheosis of feminine silliness. Addison and Pope, the two most representative literary men of the time, although they veil their contempt under a playful irony, clearly show us that they considered a female head, whether pretty or otherwise, the emptiest thing in the world. But like the great majority of their contemporaries they were content to have it so. In her letter to Bishop Burnet, which accompanied her translation of the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus, Lady Mary speaks bitterly of the prejudices which in her day shut out women from participation in intellectual training, and refers to the contempt and hostility which greeted every attempt of theirs to break these barriers down. "My sex," she says, "is usually forbid studies of this nature, and folly reckoned so much our proper sphere, that we are sooner par-

doned any excesses of that, than the least pretensions to reading or good sense. We are permitted no books but such as tend to the weakening and effeminating of the mind. Our natural defects are every way indulged, and it is looked upon as in a degree criminal to improve our reason, or fancy we have any. We are taught to place all our art in adorning our outward forms, and permitted without reproach to carry that custom even to extravagance, while our minds are entirely neglected, and by disuse of reflections filled with nothing but the trifling objects our eyes are daily entertained with. This custom, so long established and industriously upheld, makes it even ridiculous to go out of the common road, and forces one to find as many excuses, as if it were a thing altogether criminal not to play the fool in concert with other women of quality, whose birth and leisure only serve to render them the most useless and most worthless part of the creation. There is hardly a character in the world more despicable, or more liable to universal ridicule, than that of a learned woman; those words imply, according to the received sense, a tattling, impertinent, vain and conceited creature."

But although Lady Mary owed to this friend, to whom she denounces in such strong language the frivolity of contemporary womanhood, some suggestions for her Epictetus, the honor of training so apt a pupil lies with a younger scholar. No doubt her devotion to the classics grew in ardor from the date of her first acquaintance with Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu. This gentleman, the grandson of Lord Sandwich, was certainly as accomplished and blameless and—to judge by his portraits—as handsome a young Whig as ever guided the footsteps of a young and enthusiastic girl along the thorny path of learning. At their earli-

est meeting, Lady Mary, then only fourteen years old, let fall a shrewd piece of criticism on a play to the delight and surprise of at least *one* member of her audience. He was led, either on that or some other occasion, to make inquiry into her Latin studies, and his first present, characteristically enough, took the form of a beautifully-bound volume of Quintus Curtius, accompanied by some exceedingly complimentary verses in the style of the period.

There is no young girl but would be flattered at the notion of having for guide, philosopher, and friend a man several years her senior, well known in the world, and on terms of intimacy with all the foremost men of letters of the day. For Mr. Wortley, it appears, could boast of the friendship of Steele and Addison, and the acquaintance of Swift, Garth, and Congreve. What wonder was it if the delighted Lady Mary assiduously cultivated the friendship of her director's sister, Anne Wortley, to whom she wrote careful letters, clearly not intended for Mistress Anne's sole gratification, and from whom she received admirable replies, which, though copied in the handwriting of that admirable lady, were in truth the composition of her brother? By these means Mr. Wortley was enabled not only to check his pupil's errors in Latin, but also to warn her against moral defects, such as inconstancy; and to call attention to specific actions arising from the defect aforesaid, or in precise language to protest against the encouragement given to another admirer. Knowing what we do of Lady Mary's disposition, it would be rash to assert that Mr. Wortley's suspicions were groundless, though the young lady rebutted the charge with vigor. "To be capable," she says indignantly, "of preferring the despicable wretch you mention to Mr. Wortley, is as ridicu-

lous, if not as criminal, as forsaking the Deity to worship a calf." Let us hope Mr. Wortley was flattered by the comparison. It would have been less relished by the nameless admirer, who, had he heard it, would surely have ceased to importune the lady with his attentions.

In 1709 Anne Wortley died, and the lovers entered upon a direct correspondence. Mr. Wortley was a slow and doubting wooer, yet withal a very jealous one, and required a Miranda-like display of frankness from Lady Mary to call forth the definite expression of his intentions. It was a thousand pities she could not find a better Ferdinand to play to. No one can fail to be touched by the pathos of these girlish letters. We seem to see the flushed face, the wet eyes, and the sad, proud smile of the young writer as she makes her confession to this insensible lover: "While I foolishly fancied you loved me (which I confess I had never any great reason for, more than that I wished it) there is no condition of life I could not have been happy in with you, so very much I liked you—I may say loved, since it is the last thing I'll ever say to you. This is telling you sincerely my greatest weakness; and now I will oblige you with a new proof of generosity—I'll never see you more."

Poor Lady Mary was always urging upon Mr. Wortley—perhaps not very sincerely—that a parting between them was the "consummation devoutly to be wished." With a nice sense of honor she also offered to release him from every obligation since she must come portionless to his arms. For a perverse fate dogged the negotiations for the marriage. Proposals had been made to Lady Mary's father, then Lord Dorchester, and as Mr. Wortley was rich and something of a *parti*, it might have been expected that the affair would have gone merrily forward.

Unfortunately, however, Lord Dorchester had a rad on the subject of entails, and required that the property of which the prospective bridegroom was possessed should be settled on the eldest son of the marriage. As Mr. Wortley, on his side, had conscientious scruples on the same subject, but *against* the practice of entailing, and an obstinacy—Lady Mary called it resolution—at least equal, if not superior, to that of his future father-in-law, matters soon came to a deadlock. The Marquis then declared "his grandchildren should never be beggars," and the match being broken off insisted that his daughter should prepare to marry another suitor.

In the eighteenth century parents made short work of the matrimonial preferences of disobedient daughters, and Lady Mary was sorely pressed. Between an inflexible father and an equally inflexible lover, with the wedding clothes bought and the day fixed for her union with the (naturally detestable) object of her father's choice, what wonder if she felt herself "in so great a hurry of thought" that she scarcely slept one night for a whole month? Then, like the naval commanders of old, she landed and burnt her ships, in other words, sacrificed her fortune and incurred her father's wrath by secretly eloping with Mr. Wortley in August, 1712.

If we can shut our eyes to the sordid business of the entail, there is a fine air of romance about the whole proceeding, and in accordance with the high unwritten laws that govern the destinies of eloping pairs Mr. Wortley and his wife should have passed the remainder of their lives in perfect bliss. But Fate, now and then, seems to our eyes like a poor artist, who spoils by clumsy workmanship the most promising material, and so it happened that this husband and wife, instead of "living happily ever after,"

merely furnished a classical instance of matrimonial unsuitability. They started on their voyage together with fair hopes, and probably Lady Mary, though she might grumble a little at Mr. Wortley's absolutism—we have seen how in the affair of the entail he clung to his own way at all costs—would have made a very charming wife and have loved her husband as much as in after years she loved her children. But Mr. Wortley was as great a failure in matrimonial life as he was in the political world. He was at once exacting and neglectful. Like the famous Sir Willoughby Patterne—with whom we have a notion that he exhibits many traits in common—the mere thought of a rival was torture. In the days of their courtship he had never wearied of insisting that he must be first with the object of his choice, whether that object were Lady Mary herself or another. And in their early married life his great desire seems to have been to despatch his young wife to the depths of the country and keep her there out of the way of harm—or possible admirers—while he transacted his business in London. Lady Mary laughingly said, when he sent her to York at the time of Queen Anne's death, that "he had that sort of passion for her which would have made her invisible to all but himself." She might have submitted to his long absences uncomplainingly if he could have comforted her a little more, and perhaps criticised her a little less. "I would not have you do them (i.e. his London affairs) any prejudice," she writes at this time, "but a little kindness costs nothing." And the early letters are full of protest against his indifference and carelessness as a correspondent.

Like most dull people, Mr. Wortley seems to have been absolutely correct, and to have admired correctness in others. It is little wonder if in him

the critic was early found side by side with the lover. He sent his wife "quarrelling letters" a very few months after marriage, when as usual she was in the country, alone or in an uncongenial society, feeling ill and depressed in spirits. As her impetuous temperament was continually landing her in embarrassments, it will be understood that Mr. Wortley had plenty of scope for the exercise of his peculiar talents as fault-finder. One incident, which seems rather a characteristic one, is recorded by Lady Mary during her sojourn in Turkey. She had used a Turkish cosmetic with the unhappy result that her face became red and swollen. "It remained," she says, "in this lamentable state three days, during which you may be sure I passed my time very ill. I believed it would never be otherwise; and, to add to my mortification, Mr. Wortley reproached my indiscretion without ceasing." The husband, it may be remarked in passing, who takes the occasion to rub salt in a slight wound, may not be prepared to pour in oil and wine when there is a deeper hurt.

Though in 1714 Mr. Wortley was appointed one of the Commissioners of the Treasury, his political career was cut short the following year by the return of Walpole, whom he had opposed, to power. Nor was he more successful in diplomacy. After serving for a year in Constantinople as ambassador to the Porte, he received in 1717 letters of recall. No doubt his failure was a cause of mortification to his wife, who on her return to London Society was able to compare her hesitating, scrupulous husband with men who had dash and initiative and were able to cut a figure in the political and fashionable world. It is rare that marital criticism is one-sided only, and the blind admiration of the pupil may give place to the clearer-sighted judgment of the wife. While, on the other

hand, there is no man made sensitive by ill-success, but will mark and resent the change, and to judge by the bitter tone of Lady Mary's London letters, her prospects of married happiness were farther off than ever. Indeed, from this time forth she never ceased railing against the holy estate in words which, for all their surface cynicism, betray a suspicion of underlying heart-break and bitterness.

"Where," she says in a letter to her sister, "are people matched? I suppose we shall all come right in heaven as in a country dance; the hands are strangely given and taken whilst they are in motion, at last all meet their partners when the jig is done." "As for news," runs a letter in a yet more cynical vein, "the last wedding is that of Peg Pelham, and I think I have never seen so comfortable a prospect of happiness; according to all appearance she cannot fail of being a widow in six weeks at farthest, and accordingly she has been so good a housewife as to line her wedding clothes with black!"

At this stage of her career Lady Mary mocked at all things; it is clear that she was by no means happy. Her brilliant powers as a talker, her unconventional views of the world and its ways, were not likely to win the trust or approval of London matrons, and her quarrel with Pope may have rid her of many a fair-weather friend. There were also money troubles with an obscure Frenchman, which caused her endless annoyance, and stimulated by Pope's slanders the town-talk ran on her affairs.

"This is a vile world, dear sister," she writes to Lady Mar. "and I can easily comprehend that whether one is in Paris or London, one is stifled with a certain mixture of fool and knave, that most people are composed of. I would have patience with a parcel of polite rogues, or your downright honest

fools; but Father Adam shines through his whole progeny. So much for our inside; then our outward is so liable to ugliness and distempers that we are perpetually plagued with feeling our own decays and seeing those of other people. Yet sixpennyworth of common-sense divided among a whole nation would make our lives roll away glibly enough; but then we make laws and we follow customs. By the first we cut off our own pleasures, and by the second we are answerable for the faults and extravagances of others. All these things, and five hundred more, convince me (as I have the most profound veneration for the Author of Nature) that we are here in an actual state of punishment; I am satisfied I have been one of the *condemned* ever since I was born; and in submission to the divine justice I don't at all doubt but I deserved it in some pre-existent state. I will still hope that I am only in Purgatory, and that after whining and grunting a certain number of years, I shall be translated to some more happy sphere, where virtue will be natural and custom reasonable—that is, in short, where common sense will reign. I grow very devout, as you see, and place all my hopes in the next life, being totally persuaded of the nothingness of this. Don't you remember how miserable we were in the little parlor at Thoresby? We then thought marrying would put us at once into possession of all we wanted. Though, after all, I am still of opinion that it is extremely silly to submit to ill-fortune. One should pluck up a spirit and live upon cordials when one can have no other nourishment. These are my present endeavors, and I run about, though I have five thousand pins and needles running into my heart. I try to console myself with a small damsel, who is at present everything I like; but, alas! she is yet in a white frock. At fourteen she may run



away with the butler—there's one of the blessed effects of great disappointments; you are not only hurt by the thing present, but it cuts off all future hopes, and makes your very expectations melancholy. *Quelle vie!*"

*Vanitas vanitatum!* Each century echoes the world-old cry of the Preacher. There was no real outlet for this woman's superabundant energy; nothing to occupy her life but the common round of Society pleasures. She was compassionate, but the day for philanthropy was not yet. She wrote brilliantly, but authorship was a profession denied to women of her class, and though later she beguiled her time with the composition of memoirs, she destroyed them with her own hand. Her husband made no career in which she could render assistance. Even motherhood had brought her keen disappointment, for her only son was an impossible ne'er-do-well. "A mother," she wrote, "only knows a mother's fondness. Indeed, the pain so overbalances the pleasure, that I believe, if it could be thoroughly understood, there would be no mothers at all."

It was in 1739 that Lady Mary separated from her husband, whom she never met again, and began the twenty-two years' residence abroad in which she wrote so many of the letters on which her fame depends. Biographers have speculated endlessly as to her reasons for this course, for there seems to have been no open rupture

between them, and she continued to write to and of him with surface friendliness, if without much cordiality. It is possible that for many years the necessity of providing a joint home for their daughter had been the sole tie between them, and that when, in spite of her mother's warnings of the pitfalls which encompass the married state, the young lady ventured on the perilous step of accepting Lord Bute, this last tie between the parents was severed. Three years later Lady Mary made use of her freedom to leave a society of which she was weary, and a husband for whom her affection was dead. She wandered about Italy and France, and like many lonely people on whom family life exercises no salutary control, contracted many eccentric habits. The letters of this period, however, show her at her best—wise, witty, observant, full of love for her daughter, solicitude for her grandchildren, while at the last there seems to have come to her something of the quiescence of old age. She survived her husband only a few months, dying in England shortly after her return in 1762. It is easy to speak harm of her, but it is pleasanter far to speak good, for she is one of the most real and delightful women of the eighteenth century. And after all, who are we that we should declare that those who tarry longest in the Valley of Humiliation never reach the Land of Beulah?

*Mary Dormer Harris.*

## KWANNON.

*(The Goddess of Mercy and Motherhood in Japan.)*

Mine are all delicate and tender things,—  
 Soft twilight-colored moths that cannot bear  
 The day's abashless stare,—  
 The glow-worm shining softly for her mate  
 Who has no lamp, even as she has no wings,—  
 The drones that toward autumn meet their fate,  
 Fallen from their high estate  
 Because the workers and their queen have stings  
 And not one memory of the good days done  
 When the old queen was young, and 'neath the sun  
 Frolicked and loved and wedded those to-day  
 The honey-makers leave their toll to slay.

Mine are the rosy-footed doves that mourn  
 For ever in the tree-tops, night and noon  
 Like lovers left forlorn,  
 Or rose-bough cheated of its rose in June.  
 Mine are the temple-pigeons, light of mood  
 That in the craziest nests  
 Rear up an iris-breasted clamorous brood.  
 Mine are the maple-trees whose scarlet crests  
 Outbloom the red cranes and the redder sun  
 When frosts have just begun.  
 Mine is the field-mouse that a shadow scares  
 Whose nest is slung between two ears of corn,—  
 The flower that folds up if a finger dares  
 Approach her golden petals,—dew at morn,  
 The poppy reapers mow,—  
 All frail and lovely things the stars below.

Shadows and clouds are mine, dewdrops and rain,  
 Dumb creatures that we load with work and pain  
 And pay with swinging lash and angry tongue:  
 Mine are the jests unsaid, the songs unsung:  
 Mine are the groaning gates of death and birth  
 That to and fro reluctantly are swung;  
 And mine are all the weakest things on earth:  
 Pale buds on the wistaria-branches hung,—  
 The dancing monkey, chained to make you mirth,—  
 The geisha-girl whose painted lips must smile  
 Although her eyes would gladly weep awhile,—  
 The boat, that drowned her crew, drawn high and dry

Ashore to rot away and slowly die,—  
The scorched land cracking 'neath a brazen sky  
That once held many rice-fields in its girth  
And never dreamed of dearth.

Last, dearest, fairest of all feeble things,  
Mine are all children, borne with pain, to live  
And love and labor, and return again  
Unto the earth whence they arose to flower  
The blossoms of a life-time, as the plum  
And the imperial chrysanthemum  
In their own season come,  
The blossoms of a day and of an hour.

I make the light soft to the children's eyes  
With veils of rain drawn tenderly across  
The flaming sun that hunts adown the skies  
The stars no man at height of day can see,  
So keen a hunter he.

After the rain, lest baby eyes should weep  
Because the clouds so close a cover keep  
Before the bright face of the imperious sun,  
I build a rainbow east and west to show  
How laughter follows on the track of tears  
All down the years,  
How beauty shall be bullded out of fears,  
Hope out of doubt be spun.

The rainbow of five colors arched in one  
My symbol is. Its irises I wear  
For garland in my hair;  
And when the children, grown and growing old,  
My face no more behold,  
A rainbow of five colors in the sky  
Tells them that, though all passes, here am I.  
Kwannon the Merciful, with arms that strain  
To clasp my children to my arms again.

*Macmillan's Magazine.*

## TWELVE MONTHS' FICTION.

In sifting and assessing the mass of fiction which has appeared since our last special Fiction Number, twelve months ago, we have decided this year to abolish that literary compromise which usually influences the annual marshalling of the novelists' productions, and frankly to divide the year's production into two parts. It would be idle to deny that a novel by, say, Mr. Anthony Hope or Mr. H. S. Merri- man is a book of the year. It must appear in any catalogue of the year, not only because the approval of a large majority of educated persons has given it importance, but also because it is a thoroughly capable, careful, and perhaps brilliant piece of invention and of writing. On the other hand, it would be equally idle to assert that "The Velvet Glove" or "The Intrusions of Peggy" has any real vital connection with the art of fiction, that it "counts," or that it would pass muster with, or even interest, the expert opinion of a foreign country. Every competent judge knows that it would not, and is perfectly assured that in a few years it is destined to oblivion and will be as though it had never been. Such books as those we have named, despite their skilful and honest excellence, partake of the nature of a commercial article. Consciously or unconsciously they meet a market, they are according to a pattern. They lack the distinction of mind, the seriousness, the truthfulness, and above all the fundamental emotional force which every true work of art must possess. The majority, even the educated majority, cannot perceive these shortcomings, or if they perceive them they cannot estimate their significance.

We have selected six popular novels of the year as being the best of their

sort. We use the term popular in a moderate and decent sense—a sense which does not include the too-assertive vogue of books like "Temporal Power," by Marie Corelli; "Fuel of Fire," by Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler; and the "Hound of the Baskervilles," by Sir Conan Doyle. Such works as these have no artistic recommendation of any kind: they appeal to the possibly harmless instincts of the populace in the same way as a halfpenny paper does, and it would be ridiculous to pit them against the well-bred vigor and the elaborate restrained craftsmanship of writers of the calibre of Mr. Anthony Hope or Sir Walter Besant. Our selected Popular Six are as follows:—

"The Intrusions of Peggy." By Anthony Hope.

"The Velvet Glove." By H. S. Merri- man.

"Scarlet and Hyssop." By E. F. Benson.

"The Conquest of Charlotte." By D. S. Meldrum.

"No Other Way." By Sir Walter Besant.

"The Right of Way." By Sir Gilbert Parker.

Of these it is not necessary to say much. We have endeavored to place them in order of merit. There can be no doubt that Sir Gilbert Parker's was the least satisfactory of the lot; indeed Sir Gilbert's talent has already lost much of its first fineness, and if "The Right of Way" had sold two million instead of a mere two hundred thousand, the fact would remain that its author cannot much longer, if his present retrogression continues, be enumerated with the serious craftsmen. Mr. Meldrum's book deserves special mention; it delighted the readers of "Blackwood," no mean achieve-

ment, and it has decidedly opened a budding reputation.

Ranking after this half dozen, we must specify eight other popular and praiseworthy novels, all of which, we opine, well merited the attention which they received. They are named in alphabetical order:—

"The Making of a Marchioness." By F. H. Burnett.

"Adventures of M. d'Haricot." By J. S. Clouston.

"In the Fog." By R. H. Davis.

"If I were King." By Justin H. McCarthy.

"Drift." By L. T. Meade.

"The Vultures." By H. S. Merriman.

"The Credit of the County." By W. E. Norris.

"A Mystery of the Sea." By Bram Stoker.

Mr. W. E. Norris continues to produce excellent work of its kind, work which will not offend the nicest palate, though of course it may be accused of insipidity. Mr. Bram Stoker, in "A Mystery of the Sea," did not repeat the extraordinary success of that really clever "shocker," "Dracula"; but he produced what may be called "a good story." Mr. Richard Harding Davis, in "In the Fog," showed Sir Conan Doyle and Messrs. Pemberton, Marsh, Le Queux, Donovan, and Co., how well a detective story can be done by a capable hand. "The Adventures of M. d'Haricot" offers an example of a rather obvious, popular facetiousness just kept within the bounds of literary respectability. The book was neither original in plan nor very ingenious in execution, but it had a certain tact. Mrs. Meade's "drift," which we understand to be the result of an attempt on the part of that popular author to get for once out of the groove and write to satisfy herself, was a story which wins respect for its honesty of purpose, but which is far more interesting as a psychological key to the brain-processes

of Mrs. Meade than as a serious novel.

Of the innumerable company of Adeline Sergeants, S. R. Crocketts, Max Pembertons, B. M. Crockers, and other firm pillars of the circulating library, we need not discourse. We have noticed, however, that while Miss Adeline Sergeant's amazing fecundity seems to increase, Mr. S. R. Crockett's production shows a laudable tendency towards moderation.

We come now to the Artistic Novels of the year, those which do "count," and those which could not fail to interest any instructed foreign student of our literature. They are in alphabetical order, according to the authors' names:—

"Anna of the Five Towns." By Arnold Bennett.

"The Labyrinth." By R. Murray Gilchrist.

"Love and the Soul Hunters." By John Oliver Hobbes.

"The Wings of the Dove." By Henry James.

"Love with Honor." By Charles Marriott.

"The Hole in the Wall." By Arthur Morrison.

"The Success of Mark Wyngate." By U. S. Silberrad.

"The First Men in the Moon." By H. G. Wells.

"The Valley of Decision." By Edith Wharton.

In making this selection, we have entirely ignored the question of popularity or even of reputation. We have been guided solely by our artistic judgment. We put forward these nine novels as in our view the best of the year—in technique, in emotional power, and in the achievement of beauty. That the average opinion will disagree, will possibly be startled, we do not doubt, for it is a commonplace of literary history that the average opinion, though seldom contemptible, is never exactly right until it has had about



fifty years in which to ripen and correct itself. All these nine novels are artistically notable, and some, we imagine, deserve a more distinguished adjective. Mr. Murray Gilchrist's "The Labyrinth" was a fine example of the true romantic spirit working free from the trammels of any realism; its sensuous and virile charm, and the strange audacity of its close will be remembered. In "Love and the Soul Hunters" Mrs. Craigie furnished another instance, perhaps more ambitious and elaborate than any previous one, of her rare power of combining sensuous and intellectual subtlety, and again combining these with a view of life at once comprehensive and feminine. The "Wings of the Dove" was a great achievement of virtuosity, but we shall not attempt to minimize the essential artistic arrogance of Mr. James's attitude towards his readers. We incline to the view that "The First Men in the Moon," in its fusion of picturesque imagination, scientific truth, and philosophic criticism of this planet, must rank as Mr. Wells's best novel. It has been very well received in France, and we cannot forbear to comment on the irregular and piquant fact that a narrative which satisfied the readers of "The Strand Magazine" should happen to be good art.

A comparatively large number of second-class serious or genuinely humorous novels deserve particular reference, but we must be content with merely naming a round score, roughly in order of artistic importance:—

- "The River." By Eden Phillpotts.
- "The Sea-Lady." By H. G. Wells.
- "Sordon." By Benjamin Swift.
- "The Westcotes." By "Q."
- "The Conqueror." By Gertrude Atherton.
- "The Way of Escape." By Graham Travers.
- "Woodside Farm." By Mrs. W. K. Clifford.

- "The Mating of a Dove." By Mary I. Mann.
- "The Founding of Fortunes." By Jane Barlow.
- "The Keys of the House." By Algernon Glissing.
- "Donna Diana." By Richard Bagot.
- "The Lady Paramount." By Henry Harland.
- "At Sunwich Port." By W. W. Jacobs.
- "Patricia of the Hills." By C. K. Burrow.
- "The Four Feathers." By A. E. W. Mason.
- "Felix." By Robert Hichens.
- "Luke Delmege." By Father Sheehan.
- "The Happenings of Jill." By "Iota."
- "Sons of the Sword." By Margaret L. Woods.
- "Paul Kelver." By Jerome K. Jerome.

This list of volumes of short stories is rather notable:—

- "Natives of Milton." By R. Murray Gilchrist.
- "The Lady of the Barge." By W. W. Jacobs.
- "The White Wolf." By "Q."
- "Just So Stories." By Rudyard Kipling.
- "A Book of Stories." By G. S. Street.
- "The Watcher by the Threshold." By John Buchan.
- "Joe Wilson." By Henry Lawson.
- "The Place of Dreams." By William Barry.
- "The Handsome Quaker." By Katherine Tynan.
- "On the Old Trail." By Bret Harte.

Of new books by new authors, only two can be said to arouse interest:—

- "Wistons." By Miles Amber.
- "The Sheepstealers." By Violet Jacobs.

"Wistons" was unequal. The beginning showed much promise.

Lastly, we give a list of the powerful translations of the year. It is re-

grettable that Maxim Gorki stands in danger of being overdone; his talent and fertility are indubitable:—

"Forma Gordyeff." By Maxim Gorki.

"Malva and the Orloff Couple." By Maxim Gorki.

"Three of Them" (twice). By Maxim Gorki.

"Twenty-six Men and a Girl" (twice). By Maxim Gorki.

"The Outcasts." By Maxim Gorki.

"Lea." By Marcel Prévost.

"The Ballet Dancer." By Matilde Serao.

"The Conquest of Rome." By Matilde Serao.

"The Forerunner." By D. Merejowski.

"The Deepes of Deliverance." By F. van Eeden.

Upon the whole, we may say, a  
The Academy.

highly respectable fictional year, but scarcely of striking brilliance. Among its leading features we note, not without satisfaction, the further decline of the moribund fashionable historical novel. In this connection we ought to mention Mrs. Atherton's spirited and admirable attempt to inaugurate a new historical convention in "The Conqueror." We have ceased to expect work from either Mr. Meredith or Mr. Hardy, but we have the right to say that no year is complete without novels by Mr. Joseph Conrad and Mr. George Gissing. The untimely deaths of one of the most promising novelists of England and one of the most promising novelists in America—George Douglas Brown and Frank Norris—have unhappily to be recorded.

## BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

There is roystering, rollicking fun, and the true Irish humor and brogue in the account of "A Patrick Day's Hunt" for which Martin Ross furnishes the text and E. O. Somerville the illustrations. The narrative is vivacious, and the pictures,—eight of which are colored plates—are capital studies of Irish types. The volume is published as an oblong folio,—a form slightly inconvenient to hold, but giving more scope to the artist than a smaller page could have done. There is a real Irish humor; and there is a manufactured article. This is the real thing. E. P. Dutton & Co.

The author of "Laddie" and "Miss Toosey's Mission" may always count on her circle of readers for a welcome in which the warmth is almost that of personal affection. But her latest story, "Faithful,"—the study of a

character in which unselfishness is developed to a morbid degree—though the moral is pointed with the blending of sympathy and shrewd common sense which marks all her work, is not up to her best level. Nor is "Ward's Cross," the second story in the volume. Little, Brown & Co.

Delicate, graceful, charming—adjectives crowd to the lips of the grateful reader who lays down the slender little green-and-white volume, "Bayou Triste," refreshed by his hour spent with the bright, young mistress of the Louisiana plantation, listening to her stories of the picturesque life about her. They are sometimes deliciously droll, their pathos never sinks to sentimentality, they are not overloaded with dialect, and they are told in a light, easy style that fits them admirably. The writer, Josephine Hamilton

Nicholls, is a welcome addition to the widening group of sympathetic interpreters of Southern life. A. S. Barnes & Co.

To his painstaking use of detail, as well as to his familiarity with his subject, B. F. Benson's stories of the Civil War owe their almost unrivalled popularity among its veterans. Minute descriptions of the dispositions of troops and their lines of march are illustrated by diagrams and maps which add greatly to the pleasure of the reader with a taste for military technicalities. The fictitious half of the narrative, too, is always ingeniously planned. In "Bayard's Courier," (The Macmillan Co.) Mr. Benson imagines twin brothers—separated from infancy and ignorant even of each other's existence—one serving with Stuart's cavalry and the other on Pleasanton's staff, and the plot turns on the confusion of identity resulting from the resemblance between them. The book will be as successful as its predecessors.

There has been perhaps sufficient discussion of the bearing of the newer religious thought of the day upon doctrine; its effect upon life and conduct has been less considered. This is the subject to which Dr. George Albert Coe addresses himself in the volume "The Religion of a Mature Mind" (Fleming H. Revell Co.) The author's familiarity with the scientific aspects of the subject does not blind him, as it seems to have blinded many, to its spiritual aspects. The religion of a mature mind which he describes finds a place for authority, for assurance, for the Divine fatherhood, for prayer, for the experimental test of religious truth, and for a personal knowledge of Christ. The terminology is not that of the old orthodoxy, but the essence of religion is here.

The period which groups three such striking figures as Richard Coeur de Leon, Saladin and the Old Man of the Mountains, is an inviting one for the writer of historical fiction, and Nevill Myers Meakin has made effective use of the material which it offers so lavishly in the story which he names "The Assassins." Its hero is a follower of the dreaded Sheikh, under vow to kill Saladin, and volunteering in the Saracen army for that purpose, and the plot turns upon the conflict between his loyalty to his Order—strengthened by his love for one of the charming houris in that mock paradise in which he has passed a season of preparation for his mission—and his growing admiration for Saladin, and horror of treachery to him. Ingeniously planned, and full of picturesque incident and detail, the story is one of the most readable of its type. Henry Holt & Co.

One of the most amusing books of the season is "The Disentanglers," (Longmans, Green & Co.) in which Andrew Lang narrates, with apologies to Sherlock Holmes, the Adventures of two clever, young Englishmen, well-born but impecunious, who establish a confidential agency for breaking off undesirable marriages, advertising to act in behalf of "Parents, Guardians, Children and Others," and effecting the disentanglement of the amorous by the counter-fascinations of carefully-selected agents, the agents being themselves "immune" by prior attachments of their own. The filling in of this ingenious plot gives Mr. Lang opportunity for some characteristic satire on modern life and manners, the Anti-vaccinationist, the American Helress, the Lady Lecturer and the Munificent Millionaire figuring conspicuously among the victims of his ridicule. Though united by a thread of narrative, many of the Adventures can be enjoyed in-

dependently of the rest, and the volume is a capital one to take up at odd moments.

Richard Bagot's fiction has always striking qualities, and his latest novel, "*Donna Diana*," is by far his best. In its background, and in the more sordid types, both social and ecclesiastical, which it portrays, it recalls "*A Roman Mystery*," but it rises to a much higher level, whether judged by the standards of art or ethics. Donna Diana, the beautiful ward of a Roman cardinal, destined by her family to the convent, is beloved by a manly young Englishman who meets her by chance at the house of a kinsman, and her fortune, in the keeping of the Cardinal, threatens to determine her fate. Her portrait, though but faintly outlined, is a charming one. But the central figure is the Cardinal's, and to his picture the artist has brought real talent. As a serious study of significant conditions, Mr. Bagot must expect his book to be criticised, but as a story it is sure of success. Longmans, Green & Co.

Easily the most important contribution of the present season to the literature of criticism is Mr. Stopford Brooke's monograph on "*The Poetry of Robert Browning*." It is possible to quarrel with some of its opinions, and even with occasional confusions and infelicities of style, which may be partly due to the fact that the eighteen chapters of this work were first delivered as lectures. But it is impossible to deny the breadth, poise and justice of the criticism, its clear insight, its glow of sympathetic feeling or the force and brilliancy of the style. The volume suggests, in purpose and in form of construction, Mr. Brooke's earlier volume on Tennyson, and the key-note is struck in the fine chapter, comparing and contrasting Tennyson and Browning, with which the book

opens. Readers who have a close personal acquaintance with Browning's poetry may find Mr. Brooke's analyses and interpretations sometimes a little too minute, but they will remember that perhaps the main use of such criticism as this is to lead the careless reader to read more widely and reflectively and the superficial reader to read more deeply. Mr. Brooke's criticism is by no means indiscriminating: he knows his poet's limitations, but he knows also and interprets sympathetically his noble philosophy and fine ideals. T. Y. Crowell & Co.

"*The Queen's Rosary*" by Alice Davis Van Cleve is a sequence of sixty sonnets, each of which celebrates some incident in the life of Queen Victoria, —as her accession, coronation, marriage, the births and deaths of her children, the death of Prince Albert, together with some of the most striking incidents of her long reign. Within these limitations it would be unreasonable to expect verse of the highest and most spontaneous order; but the sonnets are charged with true and delicate sentiment, and some of them are deftly turned. Here, for example, is a part of the sonnet suggested by "*More Leaves*":

In cool, refreshing glades beneath the  
trees  
O'er crag and eyrie, highland and wild  
glen  
Reliving her lost years with him, again  
She wanders, wrapt in tender reveries;  
Hearing his voice borne on the waking  
breeze,  
Or fancying his step falls lightly when  
Some slight twig crackles suddenly,  
and then  
Is lonelier as the pain-wrought fantas-  
ies  
Resolve into the silence whence they  
came.

The book is daintily printed and bound. R. H. Russell.

## THE SEA-GULL.

When day is dying,  
And the red sun is lying, low and lurid  
in the darkening west,  
And the scud flying,  
And the white horses tossing to the  
wind their teased crest;

When night is falling  
Dark over billow-beaten wrack and  
rock and buffeted steep,  
And the sprites calling,  
Calling to one another in the populous  
deep:

Easily wheeling,  
On balanced level wings he floats with  
the swift breeze,  
Quick glances stealing  
From side to side downward upon the  
fishy seas—

Hist!  
A faint shade in the glimmering green  
of the main!—  
Missed!  
And with beating wings and dripping  
feet he mounts again,—  
Wake,—wail!

And sweeps sailing  
Past many a bluff expectant headland  
waiting for the tide,  
And with long wailing  
Startles the drear echoes that in its  
cavernous hollows hide,—  
Wake,—wail!

Or, leisurely rocking,  
Broods on the heaving bosom of the  
insurgent flood,  
While round are flocking  
The uneasy clamorous fluttering  
white-winged brotherhood,—

Clamoring, fluttering,  
Chattering of sea and wave and wind  
and life and love,—  
Busily muttering,  
Uprising, circling higher, higher, high-  
er, settling in the black cliffs  
above,—

Wake, wake, wake, wake,—wail!

*C. H. St. L. Russell.*

*The Cornhill Magazine.*

## AWAY.

My Heart's Desire, my Treasure, our  
wooing time was brief,  
From the misty dawns of April to the  
fading of the leaf,  
From the first clear cuckoo calling  
Till the harvest gold was falling,  
And my store of joy was garnered with  
the binding of the sheaf.  
There came another lover, more swift  
than I, more strong,  
He bore away my little love in middle  
of her song:  
Silent, ah me! his wooing,  
And silent his pursuing,  
Silent he stretched his arms to her who  
did not tarry long.

*Anna Macmanus.*

## A BENEDICTION.

God bless thee, Sweet, to-night!  
His angels, pure and white,  
Their vigil keep while thou dost  
sleep  
In peace till morning light!

God bless thee, Sweet, I pray,  
Not only one short day;—  
Through all thy life, in joy or strife,  
God keep thee safe alway!

God bless thee, hold thee fast  
When earthly days are past,  
O'er death's dark sea thy Pilot be,  
And guide thee Home at last!

*Mary Farrah, L.L.A.*

*Good Words.*

"LOVE AS A WANDERING MIN-  
STREL CAME."

Love as a wandering minstrel came—  
Came on a sweet September day;  
Sang to my heart in words of flame,  
Carolling care away.

Love as a wandering minstrel went—  
Went on a dark December day;  
And e'en God's sunshine seemeth  
spent  
In Life's eternal gray.

*Wilfrid Wilson Gibson.*

*Pall Mall Magazine.*